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BLACK EYES OR BLUE.

BY ETHEL LYNN.

Down through the blooming orchard,
On through the meadow street,
Where haycocks stood for houses,
And builders' work was sweet,
Across the shady bridges
That barred the sunny way,
Loitered, as loth to leave them,
A trio young and gay.

To Carl, with heart divided
'Twixt maidens either side,
The meadow street was Eden,
The haystacks glorified.
This side, like summer lightnings,
Black eyes grew warm and bright;
That side, blue eyes shone softly,
Or vailed their tender light.

Carl could not tell, or thought so,
Which one he loved the best;
So with a gathered daisy
He tried a lover's test.
"Black eyes or blue?" The petals
Down on the stubble fell;
"Black," "blue," "black," "blue," six others
To gather—can you tell?

Somebody blushed like roses;
Two eyes were vailed, not blue:
Ah, Carl, you looked at Black-eyes,
And then—you pulled out two.

* * * * * *

The sun at its setting was golden,
And shone on the midsummer hay,
But Love was not seen in the meadow,
To brighten the long sunny day.

A trio came hither no longer,
The braid was a strand and a twist,
Since black eyes were touched with a daisy,
And blue eyes left out of the tryst.

Oh, fair fading face to the sunset,
Oh, eyes growing brighter—Alas!
There are daisies abloom in the churchyard,
As well as in midsummer grass.

"Look up, little Rosa, my darling!"
Carl held to the lids white as snow
The blossoms she loved newly gathered,
And waked her from reverie so.

She smiled as she plucked out a petal,
And her voice had a sad little chime,
As she held up the last to her lover,
"See, Carl, it is 'Blue-eyes' next time."

The Plot Against Hawley;

OR, THE

PRISONER OF DESOLATION.

By LEON LEWIS,

AUTHOR OF "THE BOY MAGICIAN," "RED KNIFE," "THE BROKEN HOME," "EDDY'S SEARCH," "THE CLUB-FOOT BEAR," "MARK HEBER'S LUCK," ETC.

CHAPTER XXVII.

VERIFICATION.

We must now resume the thread of affairs in New York, beginning with those events which immediately concern Mrs. Hawley.

Her resolve to take personal cognizance of the proposed interview between Capt. Pedder and Tom Breeling, at the former's house, was duly acted upon.

At half-past eight o'clock of the evening of the day which had brought such startling revelations to the young wife, she was ensconced in the room over the back parlor of Pedder's house in Bleecker street—the room Miss Dail had occupied nearly a year, and ever since the commencement of her acquaintance with the Pedders.

Mrs. Hawley had gained the house, in company with Miss Dail, whose pass-key had given them admittance, without being particularly noticed, the evening being cloudy, and the twilight having merged into night at the moment when the two ladies stole swiftly up the front steps of the dwelling.

They had taken up their position near the register hole which had proved so fatal to the secret of the brother and sister, and they were now waiting and listening amid the gathering shadows of the summer night.

"You are sure Pedder is not in the house?" whispered the young wife.

"Perfectly. He merely sleeps here since his sister's departure for Desolation, and takes his meals at his club, or elsewhere."

"And what has become of that girl Kate that has been living with the couple?"

"Kate has gone to Newark to spend a month with her mother."

"There's not a soul save ourselves in the house, then, at this moment?"

"No, not a soul. Kate has received her discharge in due form, and is not coming back—at least not until the return of Miss Pedder from her voyage to the island of Desolation."

Mrs. Hawley clasped her hand to her heart and drew her breath hard.

"Oh! the agony of thinking that my husband is a helpless prisoner upon that terrible island!" she murmured—"of thinking that he has been there all these long months—and of knowing that that wretched woman is now on her way to Desolation in the *Childers*, with a lying notice of my death, and with the intention of imposing herself upon my husband!"

"You might have a worse misery," suggested Miss Dail cheerfully. "Is it not an immense gladness to know that Mr. Hawley is still living?"

"Oh! it is a bliss too great for utterance!"

"And it is not a little thing that we are upon the track of this great wickedness," continued Miss Dail. "Heaven has been merciful. The wicked do not accomplish their ends—only those poor and petty labors which conduce directly to their own destruction. Just think how gloriously your uncle Thomas is coming to your assistance."

At this juncture heavy footsteps began to be heard by the two ladies coming swiftly along Bleecker street from the direction of Broadway.

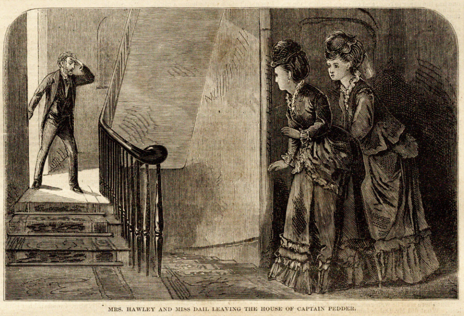
"I think it's Pedder," said Miss Dail, with a warning pressure upon the arm of her companion. "It is near the hour appointed."

Mrs. Hawley breathed hard again.

"I feel that it is Pedder!" she murmured, clasping her hand again to her heart, which was beating almost audibly.

The house was now quite in darkness, as well as in silence, the night having fully set in, and the watchers were compelled to depend upon their hearing for their information in regard to all that was occurring around them. They had left open the door leading from their room into the hall, however, and it was not difficult for them to follow the movements of the new-comer, as he ascended the steps of the dwelling, turned a night-key in the lock, and entered, closing the door behind him.

ENTERED ACCORDING TO ACT OF CONGRESS, IN THE YEAR 1872, BY ROBERT BONNER, IN THE OFFICE OF THE LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS, AT WASHINGTON.



MRS. HAWLEY AND MISS DAIL LEAVING THE HOUSE OF CAPTAIN PEDDER.

"It's Pedder, sure enough," breathed Miss Dail, after hearing a match scratched upon the side of the hall. "That trick has become habitual to him lately. He's constantly nervous and excited."

The new-comer proceeded to the back parlor with a sputtering sulphurous match, and the next instant the rays of a gas jet he had lighted cast his shadow into the hall and upon the wall at the back of the stairs, in such a way that the watchers saw and recognized it distinctly.

"Tired 's a dog!" muttered Pedder.

Rummaging around the back parlor a few moments, he found a pair of slippers, which he hastened to put on, after sinking heavily into a chair and drawing off his boots.

"How dull it is here!" he added, turning on a full head of gas and looking around discontentedly.

He took a few turns back and forth in the room, and then turned out a dram of brandy from a decanter he kept habitually in a little cupboard above the writing-desk that occupied one rear corner of the apartment. This dram of brandy he took at a single swallow. He was evidently weary with the day's toils and cares, and worried and gloomy.

Seating himself at his desk, he ran his eyes over a few memoranda of expenses, and then drew forth some elegant letter paper.

Mrs. Hawley raised a little the board and carpet that covered the register hole, and extended herself beside it, as did Miss Dail, in such a way as to look directly down upon the occupant of the room beneath her.

How bloated and coarse he looked to her at that moment of sourness and bitterness! How unlike he was to her husband!

"I ought to write to Mrs. Hawley," muttered Pedder, as he rested his elbow upon the desk, and his chin in the hollow of his hand. "How can I get upon better terms with her high-mightiness? Thus far I have been advancing as a crab advances—backward. My wooing of the 'fair widow' hasn't gone on quite as briskly as I expected."

He raised his head, striking the desk fiercely with his clenched hand, and continued:

"What an infernal misery it is to be 'spooney' after a woman that does not care a tinker's continental red blessing about you! The office and emoluments of a mule on a tow-path, or of a dog in a tread-mill, are preferable to those of a lover who sits out in the cold, sucking his thumbs and casting sheep's eyes from a distance! Egad! I wish I'd killed Hawley—in a secret manner, of course—instead of making him mate of the *Childers*, for that would have eased my pent-up feelings! And to think of myself as dancing attendance upon this she-iceberg, who has no eye for anything except that squalling baby, and no thought for anything except her lovely Billiam—oh! it makes me mad! I do hope Ruth will find the coon alive and well at Desolation, and woo and win him before they reach Melbourne, for if she don't lead him a life that would kill a wooden Indian, then I have mistaken her sweet temper altogether."

Miss Dail pressed the arm of Mrs. Hawley, whose form was tremulous with her great joy.

Her husband was certainly alive, then! From Pedder's own lips had she received the blessed evidence.

"Well, well, I must continue to dig and scratch, as I've begun," concluded Pedder, as he arose and resumed his walk to and fro. "The plot hangs fire a little, but it must certainly be successful."

He had not been walking back and forth more than a minute, when the door bell rang again, but softly—nearly as softly as the footsteps of the ringer had approached the house.

"Ah, there's Tom!" ejaculated Pedder, and his face brightened wickedly, as he stepped toward the door, with the noiselessness of slippers, to give the visitor admittance.

The new-comer was indeed Tom Breeling, whose dress and manners had all the peculiarities we have heretofore noticed. He was punctual, as usual, the clock above Pedder's desk striking nine as he entered.

"An't sick, I hope?" was his first remark, after exchanging salutations with his employer.

"No," returned Pedder. "Do I look sick?"

"You look worried, uneasy, dissatisfied, annoyed and bothered—if you'll pardon my frankness."

"Well, my looks don't belie me upon any of those points," admitted Pedder, as he sank into his chair, motioning Tom to a seat near him.

"You are lonely, I suppose; miss your sister, and all that?"

"You've hit it, I suppose. Won't you have a glass of brandy?"

"Thanks. Should I ever refuse *that* invitation, you can proceed to my funeral without the least question."

The employer produced his decanter again, with an extra tumbler, and the two men drank together.

"Have a cigar, Tom?"

"Thanks, two or three of them, since you always have the genuine article."

Both were soon smoking.

"Fact is, Tom," then said Pedder, finding his tongue loosened, "you see in me as miserable a dog as you ever shied a brick at."

"But why miserable? Didn't you make twenty thousand dollars by your last voyage to Australia?"

"Yes, I did!"

"Well, with twenty thousand dollars, in this nineteenth century a man can live like a prince in any quarter of the world he pleases—Rome, London, or Paris! Then why miserable? Explain."

"In the first place, I am worried about my sister—not that we are over-affectionate, but we work well together. It's an awful voyage that she has undertaken. True, she has Gawler and his wife with her, and I gave her ten thousand dollars for her expenses, but neither money nor friends can do everything. What if she should get sick and die? What if the clipper should be wrecked, or overhauled by a pirate? What if Hawley should have been rescued by some passing ship, and she should miss him altogether?"

"These evils are possible enough," replied Tom—"all except your pirate. None of the East Indian pirates—not even the Malay Gunner—have ever got as far south as Australia and Desolation. The Australian route is too well guarded by English and American men-of-war. As to the clipper's being wrecked, Captain Hooper is a sound man, and a wreck isn't probable. And as to your sister's getting sick and dying, why, we're all mortal, and must take our chances."

"But it isn't this anxiety about my sister that troubles me the most," explained Pedder further. "My real trouble is, that I am not getting on in my wooing of the 'fair widow.' I'm afraid the thing's settling into a failure at my end of the line, however successful my sister may get on with Hawley."

"You are too impatient," said Tom, as he leisurely dispatched a long wreath of smoke toward the ceiling. "Your 'widow' is full of tears, and they must have a chance to ooze. You must let her mourn her 'dear departed' a few months, and in the mean time continue to make yourself useful."

"Useful? She won't give me a chance. She don't even see me when I call. I've had a fear once or twice that she may suspect me."

"You ought to poultice your head then," declared Tom bluntly. "There's no way in which she can have possibly obtained a hint of your projects."

Mrs. Hawley almost smiled, as she peered down upon the confident Breeling.

"We will hope for the best, of course," said Pedder, trying to shake off his gloom. "My sister will soon rescue Hawley, if nothing happens, and take him on to Melbourne, and thence to Sidney, where she means to retain him ten years or a lifetime. Among her other arts of wooing him, she is going to offer him money enough to buy a handsome interest in a shipping house, and this monied interest, in addition to all the other interests she can bring to bear upon him, will doubtless decide him to remain in Australia as her husband, as she will bear to him convincing evidence that Mrs. Hawley is dead."

"Then you have nothing to complain of, so far as your sister's case is concerned, and all you have to do is to press on your own suit to victory."

"It's to consult you in regard to my course that I have invited you here to-night," said Pedder. "Mrs. Hawley is not using her two thousand dollars in the way I expected. Instead of living quietly at Mrs. Piper's, and receiving my visits and benefactions in a becoming spirit, she is actually thinking of setting herself up in a thread and needle store! Could anything be more disgusting? That woman would sooner scrub floors, no doubt, than accept me as her husband! The first thing for us to do is to rob her of that money."

"Well, that's a small matter that can safely be left to me," said Tom, continuing to smoke complacently. "Only, the next time I get hold of that money, I shall keep it."

"You may keep it, of course, and I'll add a hundred or two to it, just so soon as I see it in your possession."

"All right. I'll undertake the job immediately. Possibly I may fail, for she'll keep a tight hold of the cash now. I can't take lodgings there again, as 'Deacon Sanborn,' of course, but I've more'n one string to my bow, and I'll soon invent a hook that'll bring that money to my pocket. And even supposing I shouldn't? Why, she'll set herself up in some small crib in the Bowery, or in some such locality. She'll be away from your Mrs. Piper, and that, I think, is no small matter—"

"You are right, Tom. That old Mrs. Piper is a dog in the manger. My intention has been all along to conciliate the old tigress and turn her to account, but I shall have to give up the job. At the worst, therefore, if Mrs. Hawley goes into business, she will still be under my eye. She will even be more accessible than now, as I can enter her store at any time—buy needles and thread there, in fact, by the bushel."

"And then, if things don't go to suit you, we can soon make a new deal," suggested Tom, with a wicked leer. "Her goods won't be more'n half insured, and we can burn them, or I can take some such chap as Gawler with me, and carry off a wagon load of them between two days. You could even set up my wife in the business next door, with orders to sell everything ten per cent. below cost, and so run her ladyship out of business."

"All these ideas are good ones," approved Pedder. "I'm glad I asked your advice. Let's take another drink."

The drink was taken, and Pedder resumed:

"If you steal the money, Mrs. Hawley will not be able to go into business, and that is the plan of my choice. But if you can't steal the money, and she sets herself up in a thread and needle store, we must worry her. Should she have a nurse and send her child out for an airing, it may be a good idea for us to steal the brat. I've thought of this point repeatedly. I'd like to wring her heart—curse me if I wouldn't! I think sometimes that I hate her more than I love her. If we can't steal the best half of her goods, we must burn the whole of them, or at least get an engine to playing upon them. We must get her into debt, make it impossible for her to pay her rent, speak ill of her to every one with whom she comes in contact, throw out all manner of innuendoes against her, and even get her arrested upon some trumped up charge, such as setting fire to her store to defraud the insurance companies."

Mrs. Hawley sat as if petrified by these revelations of the character of the man before her. Upon no other evidence than her own hearing could she have believed the smooth-tongued Pedder guilty of such unblushing infamies.

"In short," returned Breeling, "you wish to make her ladyship so utterly friendless and miserable that she must accept your offer of marriage or become a pauper?"

"That's it exactly," declared Pedder savagely. "If she does not marry me, I will hunt her to the grave, as sure's I'm living! I've said it, and I swear it."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

ACTING UPON HER DISCOVERY.

If some demon had betrayed Pedder, putting into his mouth the words best calculated to unvail his hideous nature, the unscrupulous plotter could not have been better directed.

How completely had he unmasked himself!

There was little sequence, of course, in the order of these revelations—some links in their chain were entirely wanting—but their general tenor had proved to Mrs. Hawley that the communications of Miss Dail were entirely and absolutely the truth in the matter.

And the joy this sweeping confirmation had gradually poured into the soul of the young wife and mother was too great for utterance.

It was little that vast oceans lay between her and her husband.

He lived! She would see him again! Her boy would have a father's care and protection!

The ecstasy of thoughts like these can only be felt or imagined.

"There are forty measures of the kind mentioned that we can accomplish together, Tom," continued Pedder, after a brief pause, "and I want you to hold yourself in readiness to come to my assistance at a moment's notice."

"All right, sir. You can always find me at any hour of the day or night at the old number. You can depend upon me, of course—so long as I can depend upon you for the needful. By the way, I am a little short to-night. Can you let me have three hundred dollars?"

"I think so. I'll see."

He rummaged in his desk a few moments, with a slight contraction of his brows, and produced the sum mentioned, handing it to his minion.

"Thanks," said Breeling, securing the money in his pocket-book and arising. "I'll set to work at once, and report progress every day or two. And this is all you have to say to me at present?"

Pedder nodded assent as he also arose, and the next instant Tom took his departure.

Left to himself, Pedder returned to his desk, sinking heavily into a chair. The contraction which had appeared on his brows deepened to a frown.

"Tom is costing me a mint of money," he muttered, glancing at the column of figures which had previously arrested his attention. "Here's a total of nearly a thousand dollars since our return to New York. He must have cost me five times that amount within a year. He's rapacious as a cormorant. I shall have to shut down on his demands soon, if our little plans don't take a turn for the better. But, after all, he has done me great service. It was a delicate job to start those water casks, and a still more difficult one to knock Hawley upon the head in such a way as he did at Desolation—leaving him alive, but making everybody believe him to be dead."

He added the sum just given Breeling to the somewhat disquieting figures before him, and then locked his desk, with a prolonged yawn.

"Well, I may as well go to bed," he said to himself, arising and turning off the gas. "Suppose I ought to search the house, to be sure that no burglars have entered during the day. It may have got around that I am absent most of the time. How dark and lonely it is here. Almost wish I had asked Tom to stay all night. Should have done so, if he hadn't disgusted me with that call for more money. Well, well, it's some comfort to know that Mrs. Hawley is worth all she can possibly cost me."

And thus growling to himself, Pedder ascended the stairs, the listeners following his movements in the darkness as well by their ears as if they had been able to see him.

The moment seemed critical to Mrs. Hawley.

What if Pedder should detect her presence?

She trembled at the thought.

But Miss Dail pressed her arm reassuringly.

Slowly Pedder shuffled up the stairs, with very little noise, and slowly he felt his way along the hall to the front chamber, into which he passed, closing and locking the door behind him.

Mrs. Hawley drew a long sigh of relief.

"We can go now," she whispered.

"Yes, while Pedder is moving about. Hark! he is shutting a window. Now he is drawing a glass of Croton. His brandy has made him thirsty. He is letting the water run, to get it cooler. Hear? We had better go now. Let me guide you."

And Miss Dail took her companion by the hand, leading the way out of the back chamber and down the long flight of stairs.

Their movements were completely covered by the noise of the running Croton—so long as it lasted.

But just as they reached the foot of the stairs the running water was suddenly turned off, and at that instant Mrs. Hawley, having expected another step or two, thrust her foot against the oil-cloth upon the floor of the hall with a rasping sound, and the noise gave both the ladies such a fright that they halted abruptly.

The next moment a door opened, and a light flashed into the hall above them.

"Must be those infernal rats!" Pedder was heard muttering. "Always knew the house was full of them. I'm glad I've a chance to sell the old rookery. If I can find a poker, I'll get my boots on—"

The rest was lost to the listeners, as Pedder withdrew into the front chamber.

"Now, then," whispered Miss Dail.

They moved forward rapidly.

Pedder had locked the front door, as well as bolted it, but the key was in the lock, and Miss Dail was familiar with everything, so that she had not the least difficulty in opening the door.

"I'll leave the key turned in the lock," she breathed, "and so cause Pedder to think that the door was not closed when he locked it. And thus the rats and Pedder himself will bear all the blame."

The action was suited to the word, and the next instant the couple were in the street, hurrying toward Mrs. Piper's.

"Thank God!" came from the full heart of Mrs. Hawley. "How gloriously everything has turned! You were not mistaken in anything—not even in the details. I know now to a certainty that my husband is still living. How happy I am! What a load you have taken from my heart! I shall never, never cease to be grateful and to love you. You shall always be to me the dearest of sisters."

Miss Dail expressed a corresponding sentiment, and they were soon at Mrs. Piper's. The good landlady herself was seated upon the steps, awaiting their return with the greatest anxiety and impatience.

"We began to be worried," she said. "We feared that Pedder and his ruffians had detected your presence. All has gone well?"

"Gloriously," returned Mrs. Hawley, whose dancing eyes were more eloquent than her voice.

"Mr. Jilson and Mr. Wilber are both here," continued Mrs. Piper, as she led the way into the hall. "They have been here half an hour, and have proposed several times to go down to Bleecker street to look after you."

She was interrupted by the young gentlemen, who had heard her voice, and now came hurrying out of the parlor. The greetings that followed were full of gladness. Mrs. Piper and Mr. Jilson showered Mrs. Hawley with questions, while Mr. Wilber drew from Miss Dail a brief account of all that had happened.

"Well, it seems that our fair explorers have made a success of it," said Mr. Jilson smilingly, as the little party seated themselves in the parlor. "They have heard from Pedder's own lips just how the case stands. Mr.

Hawley is alive at the island of Desolation, playing Robinson Crusoe all alone by himself, and much against his will. Miss Pedder is on her way out there in the *Childers*, with the intention of telling him that Mrs. Hawley is dead, and all that sort of thing. And the question that now arises is one of just five words: What are we to do?"

"We are to proceed to set things to right as soon as we can," declared Mrs. Hawley emphatically, all eyes having turned to her for an answer to Mr. Jilson's question. "Pedder and his sister are to be defeated in their wickedness, and my husband is to be set free from his horrible imprisonment. I shall sail at once for Desolation."

The two young gentlemen exchanged glances of intelligence with each other.

"Mr. Wilber and I have discussed your probable action, Mrs. Hawley," said Jilson, "and we have made some inquiries this afternoon bearing upon this very point. We are sorry to learn that Minnell & Co. will not dispatch another ship to Australia under three or four months."

"Then we must look elsewhere," returned Mrs. Hawley, as decidedly as before.

"The very thing Mr. Wilber and I said to ourselves," went on Jilson, "and we have accordingly looked elsewhere—you can imagine with what feverish haste. We have looked through all the shipping journals, and visited a dozen shipping offices—"

"And our search has finally been rewarded," broke in Wilber, who was in a glow of joyous excitement.

"You have found a ship, then, which is about to sail for Australia, or in that direction?" murmured Mrs. Hawley.

"We have," replied Jilson. "We learned at the eleventh hour that Thompson & Co. are about to dispatch a ship to Melbourne. We could not at first credit the information, for two reasons: First, Thompson & Co. are not in the Australian trade, but confine themselves to freight and passenger business to Liverpool; second, we had not seen along the docks or in any newspaper the least hint of such an intention—"

"But on visiting Thompson & Co. at their office," broke in Wilber again, "we found that our information was perfectly correct. Thompson & Co. *do* intend to dispatch one of their ships to Australia, in accordance with an exceptional arrangement they have made with two or three large shipping houses. The freight and passenger lists of this ship have been full for a week past, and that is why we did not get any trace of her in the papers. She is a fine vessel, and a clipper—the *Ocean Monarch*—and she sails day after to-morrow."

Mrs. Hawley echoed the concluding words, arising excitedly to her feet.

"But Desolation is out of her course," suggested Mrs. Piper. "And her passenger list already full!"

"And Thompson & Co. accordingly told us," said Wilber, "that a call at Desolation was simply impossible, and that they could not take another passenger, for love or money."

The young wife and mother turned deathly pale, sinking back into her chair.

"But hear what *we* had to say in the case," said Jilson, with suppressed jubilance. "When a lady has the honor of being the niece and only relative of a great East Indian millionaire, it is not necessary for her friends to take a negative answer, when an affirmative answer will suit them better. I reflected that I, Henry Jilson, as small as I am, have the pleasure of being a trusted servant of the house of Duncan, Sherman & Co. I reflected too, that your uncle, Mrs. Hawley, has put a hundred thousand dollars into the hands of my principals, in addition to the hundred thousand dollars we are holding subject to your order—"

"And we accordingly resolved that we wouldn't take Mr. Thompson's negative for an answer," broke in Wilber once more, "and in less than a minute Jilson was looking for his chief, Mr. Duncan. Mr. Duncan found, Jilson told him everything—Pedder's wickedness, Mr. Hawley's danger, Mrs. Hawley's distress and her hundred thousand, Mr. Aymar's expected return from India and his million—in short, *everything*."

"And what—did Mr. Duncan say?" faltered Mrs. Hawley breathlessly.

"Why, he simply said that he would attend to the matter," replied Wilber. "He simply went with Jilson to Mr. Thompson, and told Mr. Thompson the facts in the case. Then he discussed with Mr. Thompson several necessary points, such as insurance, and the whole arrangement was satisfactorily concluded. Mrs. Hawley is to sail in the *Monarch*, with as many friends as she pleases, and the *Monarch* is to call at the island of Desolation."

"Thank God!" exclaimed Mrs. Hawley, as her eyes filled with tears. "And the *Monarch* sails day after to-morrow?"

The young gentlemen both bowed.

"I shall sail in the *Monarch*, of course," said Mrs. Hawley, "and I am more obliged and indebted to you all than my feeble thanks can tell you. But I shall want company. Who will go with me? Will you, Miss Dail?"

"With the greatest pleasure."

"Will you, Mr. Wilber?"

"You are only too kind, Mrs. Hawley. I have long been wishing I could escape from my clerkship. I shall bear you company with a double delight—the pleasure of serving you, and the joy of being near the young lady who is to be Mrs. Wilber."

"I will take baby—which will suit me a thousand times better than to leave him behind me," said the young mother. "Miss Dail and Mr. Wilber will afford me sufficient protection and companionship. Mr. Jilson cannot well be spared from home, I judge from certain remarks he has made, but he can continue to render me the greatest of services here. My uncle, Mr. Aymar, was to sail from Calcutta about the middle of February, and he is accordingly overdue at this port at this very moment. I would like to charge you, Mr. Jilson, with the reception of my uncle, and with the duty of explaining to him all that has happened."

"Thanks. I was abont to offer my services to this very end," said Jilson. "As you have observed, I cannot very well leave home at present, but all that I can do for you here, Mrs. Hawley, shall be done with the greatest zeal and pleasure."

"Well, what am *I* to do?" demanded Mrs. Piper, arising. "It seems that I am of no further use or account whatever."

"I was coming to that, my dear Mrs. Piper," said Mrs. Hawley, embracing her affectionately. "You are to remain just where you are, and so be here to take care of 'Uncle Tommy.' The moment he arrives in New York, Mr. Jilson is to bring him here, Mrs. Piper, and all I ask of you is that you will be as kind and good to my uncle as you have been to me ever since the first hour of our acquaintance."

"Bravo! All is settled!" cried Wilber, seizing Miss Dail in his arms and giving her a merry waltz across the room. "Won't Mr. Hawley be surprised to see us dropping in upon him some fine morning before breakfast? That baby especially will astonish him!"

The remainder of the evening was passed in discussing various details, and then the little party separated.

The night proved a sleepless one to Mrs. Hawley, but it was a happy one. The following day glided away like a vision, it was so full of busy preparations, and then came the morning of the *Monarch's* departure.

To keep everything quiet, it was arranged that Mrs. Hawley's name should not appear in the published list of passengers.

She went aboard early, with her friends, and took refuge in her state-room, thus avoiding all the crowds and excitement incident to the departure. But Mr. Duncan and Mr. Thompson both came to make her personal acquaintance, and both assured her of their services, as of their sympathy, in every possible way and manner. Mrs. Piper and Mr. Jilson were both there to see her off; and Mr. Thompson brought the commander of the ship to her room, recommending her to his especial care and attention. And so everything was made as pleasant as possible.

And when at length the majority of her friends had left her and gone ashore, leaving only baby and Miss Dail and Mr. Wilber—when at length the ship had left her dock and sailed down the harbor and headed out into the trackless ocean—then it was that Mrs. Hawley stole up to the deck and detached her thoughts from the shores behind her and sent them ahead to her husband, and then it was that her eyes filled with tears, and her heart quickened its throbs, and she murmured softly:

"Coming! *coming!*"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

A DAY IN THE COUNTRY.

BY AMY RANDOLPH.

"The sweetest place you ever saw, my dear," said Mrs. Ecclesfield. "I went with Maurice to look at it yesterday. A real low-eaved cottage, with trellises over all the windows, and a charming little lawn sloping down to the river-side, and lots of sweet-smelling honeysuckle, and espaliers full of peaches and apricots, and the garden all ready planted, and the rent—oh, the merest trifle, my dear, compared to the ruinous rates one is forced to pay for a decent house in the city."

"But isn't it very far from Mr. Ecclesfield's business?" asked Mrs. Martin.

"An hour, by boat; but that is nothing when one has the paper to read, and all one's friends sitting around, ready to talk politics and all that sort of thing, for passing the time."

And away bustled the young bride to see about engaging garden tools and glass fruit dishes, and a patent cream freezer, and all the other housekeeping delights supposed to be inseparable adjuncts of a house in the country.

"Good-bye, my darling!" said Mr. Ecclesfield, on the bright June morning on which he had safely established his wife and her household at Hillside Cottage. "I'll bring up Jones and Barksdale to dinner, just to taste our new strawberries. You'll not be dull, Jessie?"

"Dull! In this paradise of a place! Oh, never, Maurice!"

And Mrs. Ecclesfield tripped back to the house, with her apron full of roses.

At the door Kathleen the cook met her.

"If ye please, ma'am, where's the wather?"

"The water, Kathleen! Why, in the faucets, to be sure, over the kitchen sink. Where should it be?"

"Sorry a faucet is there, ma'am, or a sink either."

"But, Kathleen, there must be water somewhere."

"Faix, ma'am, and that's what I was after thinkin', me own self; but I don't see aither hide nor hair of it! And will yez plase to come and look yerself?"

Jessie advanced to the kitchen threshold rather unwillingly; she was, as yet, a novice in housekeeping duties; nor did this department of her woman's kingdom look particularly inviting. The floor was damp and mouldy, the ceilings black with soot and smoke, and the newly kindled fire spluttered and smoked sullenly in the rickety range.

"Well, Kathleen," she said, "you'll have to go to the river."

"Till the river! For water to bile the fish and the peraties! An' the cows a standin' in it knee keep, let alone the dhirty little boys bathin' in it, like so many imps o' Satan. Sure, ma'am, it isn't that you're manin'!"

"But there *must* be water somewhere, Kathleen. What did Mr. Dale's family do?"

"Well, ma'am, and I can't be sayin'."

Mrs. Ecclesfield looped up her white dress at once, and got her garden hat.

"I'm going to look," she said. "Of course we can't get along without water."

She found it presently—a sunken hole at the end of a long, grass-grown path, with a leaking bucket and a long wet rope lying beside it.

"And is it here I've got to come for every dhrop of water?" demanded Kathleen, in consternation.

"It won't be much, Kathleen, when you are used to it," coaxed Mrs. Ecclesfield.

"My goodness me! who are all those people getting out of a boat, and climbing up the bank, with baskets and bottles and things?"

Kathleen stared, shading her eyes with her hand.

"'Deed, ma'am, I believe it's a picnic party."

"A picnic party!" cried Jessie, firing up. "And what business have they here, with their horrid black bottles and paper parcels, I'd like to know? Go and order them off the premises, Kathleen, at once!"

And Kathleen, in no wise objecting, hurried to obey her lady's behests.

Presently she returned, somewhat crestfallen.

"They won't go, ma'am."

"Won't go! Are they aware that these are private grounds?"

"I told 'em so, ma'am, often enough. But they're a-settin' down to lunch in the arbor!"

Mrs. Ecclesfield colored scarlet with indignation.

"Call a policeman, Kathleen, at once!"

"There an't no police, ma'am, only Teddy the errand-boy, and he isn't twelve years old yet."

"But what *are* we to do, Kathleen?"

"We can't do nothin', ma'am, but grin and bear it," said honest Kathleen. "Bridget, that used to live with Mrs. Dale's people, came here for a cup o' meal this mornin', and she says it's a easy place to land, and all the picnics comes here, and they has fights sometimes, and—"

Mrs. Ecclesfield uttered a little scream and fled into the house. The *couleur de rose* that had adorned her "country home" was fast becoming dispelled; she was beginning to wish herself back within the area of stone flaggings and metropolitan lamp posts.

"Kathleen," said she with a little sigh, "we will have ice-cream and strawberries for dessert."

"And where is it we'll get them, ma'am?"

"Why, there is the new patent freezer, warranted to take only three minutes."

"An' where's the crame?"

Jessie laughed.

"To think of your asking such a question as that, Kathleen, when there are three cows!"

"Aye, but where is they? It's meself hasn't seen the whisk of a cow's tail since I've been here."

"Send Teddy for them."

"It's what I thought of meself, to get milk for the biscuit; but Teddy says they've been lost for a week."

"Lost!" cried Jessie Ecclesfield blankly. "The cows! Well, then we shall have to content ourselves with the berries, eaten with powdered sugar."

Kathleen looked doubtful.

"Sure and *I* haven't unpacked any powdhered sugar; it's only good clane brown coffee sugar."

"But that won't do for berries, Kathleen."

"And what will we do?"

"I am sure I don't know," answered Mrs. Ecclesfield despairingly. "Send to the grocery."

"There's none this side o' the landing, ma'am, and that's three miles off."

Jessie bit her lip.

"I will go and get the strawberries, at any event," said she. "Give me a basket, Kathleen."

But the picnickers were already in triumphant possession of the strawberry bed.

"Go away instantly," said Mrs. Ecclesfield, stamping her French boot on the grass. "How dare you trespass so?"

A red-faced matron rose up out of the berry vines close to her, with three tow-headed little boys hanging to her skirts.

"And I should think you'd be ashamed of yourself, grinding the faces of the poor!" she screeched, so sharply that Jessie dropped her basket and started back involuntarily. "But it's always the way with them that's rich. It won't be so in the next world, that's *one* comfort. To grudge a few berries out o' *this* big field! But we won't go away till we're ready; so there, now!"

And the three tow-headed boys, who appeared to be diverting themselves with dancing about and crushing a score of rich juicy berries to every one they picked, made such a charge in Mrs. Ecclesfield's direction that she fairly turned and fled.

"They *must* be going away soon," she thought, "and I must wait until then."

But even the peace of the musty-smelling little parlor, where there were ominous spots of blue mould on the wall-paper and wasp's nests under the cornices, was not destined to remain uninvaded. A brisk thunder-shower coming up, the picnic party unceremoniously took possession of the house; and Jessie, terrified at Kathleen's stories of "fights," and noticing that some of the men talked loud and thick, took refuge in the wood-house, where the roof leaked plentifully over her delicate lilac muslin dress, and a squealing pig, divided from her by only one slender partition of boards, rent the air with his cries.

Suddenly Kathleen rushed into the wood-house, her luxuriant black hair tumbling down her back, her eyes protruding from their sockets.

Jessie started up in terror.

"Why, Kathleen," she cried, "what is the matter?"

"Yez niver towld me there was a ghost!" screamed Kathleen, "or it's meself niver would have come near the tumbledown owld shanty! Give me me month's wages, and let me go. I wouldn't slape in the house a night, no, not for it's weight in gold."

"A ghost, Kathleen! What on earth can you mean?"

"And what *should* I be manin', let alone what I'm saying? Give me the ten dollars, and let me go before night? For isn't it Mike Dooley that's sayin' this place is called the Haunted House, as full o' ghosts as an egg is of meat? Wid one all to hisself in the kitchen, groanin' and lurchin' round the pots and pans, so that a dacent girrel can't stay in the house?"

"But, Kathleen, all this is nonsense. For, don't you see—"

"Me wages—me wages!" reiterated the terror-stricken Kathleen. And Mrs. Ecclesfield could only comply with her demand. And five minutes afterward she could see the superstitious damsel rushing down the lane, desperately intent on catching the evening boat for New York.

Twilight fell, dark and rainy. The picnickers had at last graciously concluded to depart, leaving evident traces of muddy feet and dirty fingers on sofas, curtains and carpets, and the kitchen fire had gone out in ashes and embers. Mrs. Ecclesfield would have lighted a lamp had she known where to find one, and not been mortally afraid of kerosene oil. As it was, she sat crying in the middle of the room when Maurice strode cheerfully in.

"Why, my little pet," he cried, in consternation, "what's the matter?"

"Take me back to New York, Maurice," sobbed Jessie, "for I am sick of the country. I never, never can live here!"

The next day Mr. Ecclesfield moved his wife and other household deities to the city, thereby losing a quarter's rent of "Hillside Cottage," and considering himself to have gotten off cheaply at that. And Mrs. Jessie has never since had a word to say about the delights of "life in the country!"

OFF HER GUARD.

BY ANNA SHEILDS.

Uncle Will. Harding was in a quandary, and upon his frank, pleasant face the imp of Care was drawing unusual lines of reflection. He was a bachelor, but he had brought up one boy, his nephew, from copper-toed shoes and marbles to a partnership in his own well-known law office.

Already, in three years, the talented young lawyer had started the business into new life, and scattered the dust of his easy-going uncle's documents in every direction. Already Harry Harding was mentioned by his seniors in the profession as one likely to make his mark, and place his name far higher than his unambitious uncle had ever put his own. Indeed, smiling friends declared that the only real use Will. Harding's legal knowledge had ever been to him, was to give him the power of instructing his nephew, and take good care of his own comfortable income and said nephew's patrimony.

Sitting in his office musing, Uncle Will.'s thoughts ran something in this wise:

"Wants to get married to a girl who has been an heiress, a milliner, and an heiress again! Lost her money when she was but sixteen, was a milliner for four years, and now, by the death of a dishonest guardian, regains her property. All very well, as far as it goes. Pretty girl; romantic story! But what bothers me is the milliner episode. Sixteen is an impressible age. What impress was left on that young life? Harry should marry a lady. He has money enough of his own. By the way, if he is going to marry Alice Dunham, I am glad he proposed before her guardian died. He has position, education, and cultivation. Will this girl raise him or lower him? Vulgar beauty, outside polish, and innate coarseness are so often seen together, and it is so hard to catch a young lady off her guard. Dear! dear! I am half sorry he asked my advice; but how could I say Nay when he was so much in love? Ah, dear! I might have been a different man if my love dream had not been all a dream. With a wife to cheer me, children to inherit my name, I might have worked my way upward, instead of sitting down to a humdrum, almost useless existence. But I hope she is a lady. She will not give Harry an answer until she knows I approve of his choice. That looks well. But of course she will have all her company manners on for me when I call this evening, so how can I say aught but yes? Botheration! I wish they had settled the business between them, and left me out altogether."

The old gentleman rose as he finished his reverie, and gave himself a shake, as if throwing off his perplexities for the time.

"Three o'clock! and I have had no luncheon," he said aloud, looking at his watch. "I'll run into Jones' and get some oysters," and he drew on his overcoat as he spoke.

The restaurant had a deserted look as the old gentleman entered, the crowd of luncheon seekers usually scattering at an earlier hour, but Mr. Harding selected a little corner table, and opened a newspaper. Before his order was filled, two young ladies, richly and becomingly dressed, came in, chatting gayly, and took possession of a table near his own.

One of them, a brown-eyed, soft-complexioned girl, attracted the old gentleman's eye, by the perfect taste and propriety of her dress, which showed care in selection, was of rich material, and yet had no glowing contrast or showy point. The other, a brunette, wore a dress of equal richness, but just a trifle too showy for good taste, though calculated to heighten her glowing style of prettiness. This last named drew a chair toward her, after seating herself, and put up her feet in an attitude that would scarcely bear criticism. She then proceeded to pour into her lap the contents of her shopping bag.

"Ella!" her companion said, in a low tone, with an expression of shocked surprise.

"Oh, pshaw!" said the other, "who cares? I know this is not a drawing-room attitude, but there is no one here. I want to see if I have all the things I want. Isn't that a lovely pink saucer?"

"It is a beautiful color, certainly."

"Why didn't you get one? That is the only fault in your face; you are too pale. Just the tiniest tinge of this would make you lovely."

"I am afraid I must resign the hope of being lovely, then," was the reply, "if it depends upon the use of rouge."

"Every one to her taste. For my part, I believe in a little art, if Nature is unkind. See my new frizettes. You don't need frizettes, with your crop of short curls. I wish my hair was curly. No, I don't. Black curls are niggery. I wonder if our order is ever coming. I am famishing. An't you hungry?"

"Very. Did you notice that painting in G——'s window, Ella?"

"No. I never look at pictures, unless I am at a picture gallery with some companion I am fascinating. Then I can discourse as eloquently as any lady upon lights and shades, attitudes and expressions. I always study the catalogue beforehand, to see what it is safe to admire. But you draw, don't you?"

"I have commenced my lessons again. I had to give them up when I was at Madame Rigand's."

"See here, Alice," said Ella earnestly, "I wouldn't talk about Madame Rigand's now, if I were you."

"Do I talk about it?"

"Well, refer to it, I mean. Of course I understand all about it; but there are some people, you know, who might think it odd to hear you talk about being in a milliner's store."

"There is nothing odd about it. I was obliged to earn my living, and I did it. I was too young for a teacher, so I became a milliner. I do not deny, however, that I am very glad to have my money again, and I am studying very hard to make up for the time I have lost."

"Bah! You know enough for an heiress. For my part, if I find time for a singing lesson twice a week, it is all I aspire to. Here comes our luncheon. Have a cobbler, Alice?"

"A cobbler?"

"Sherry. Bring two," to the waiter.

"No, no," said Alice hastily, "not for me. I never drink wine, Ella."

"Don't you? I don't before folks, but when I can enjoy a luncheon alone, I always have wine. Help yourself, Alice, while I put these things back in my bag. I have not half I want. We will go back to our shopping after luncheon."

Just over the top of his paper Mr. Harding watched the ladies eating their luncheon. The brown-eyed Alice and the black-eyed Ella, all unconscious of his criticising scrutiny, ate with young, hearty appetites, chatting of their purchases made and to come.

Ella ate with a total disregard of the little niceties that seemed second nature to her companion. Without any affectation, with no constraint, Alice was refined in every movement, evidently accustomed in the daily routine of her meals to observe the elegancies of table etiquette, while her companion used her knife and fork, cup, saucer and plate with a carelessness that spoke ill for her home breeding. Something of the contrast seemed to strike the young girl herself, for she said:

"Don't mind me, Alice. Eat heartily, and don't mind company manners."

"But," Alice said, blushing, "I have no company manners, Ella."

"Dear me, are you always on stilts?"

"Do you think I am?"

"Well, no. Now I think of it, you are always just the same. Aunt Mary said you were just as polite to those clodhoppers on her farm as you are to our city beaux. And yet you are never stiff or constrained. I believe you are right; your company manners are every-day ones, or your every-day ones serve for company: which is it?"

"Just as you please."

"Well, I frankly confess I put off my airs and graces when I am alone, and take my ease. Are you going to Mrs. Eustace's to-morrow evening?"

"I think so. Mrs. Eustace was one of the friends who was as kind to me when I was a milliner as she is now. I made all her bonnets for four years."

"Alice Dunham, do drop that milliner store!"

"I will try, Ella. I am not ashamed of it, and it seems natural to speak of what was my life for so long a time. But if it annoys my friends, I will try to consign it to oblivion."

"You'll never get married if you don't. I am sure no gentleman would like to hear his wife telling she had worked in a milliner's. Oh, Alice, do tell me, by the way, is young Harding—"

"Ella, please," said Alice, in a distressed tone.

"Pshaw! We are alone. That venerable party in the corner has gone to sleep behind his newspaper, and who cares for the waiters?"

"I do. I shall really consider it a favor if you will reserve a discussion of our own affairs until we are at home."

"Our own affairs! So you consider that he is your own affairs," said the incorrigible Ella. "Bless me! You don't want any pink saucer now, Alice."

"Ella," said Alice—and now the voice was stern, and the manner dignified—"you will really confer a favor upon me, if you will converse on general subjects in a public place."

"Bless her heart, she sha'n't be teased," said Ella, laughing heartily. "Come; we have not more than an hour of daylight left, and I have some silk to match."

They left the "venerable party in the corner," still hidden behind his newspaper, but as soon as the graceful young figures had left the store, Mr. Harding, folding his paper, followed them up Broadway. They were unconscious of his vicinity, as they transacted their feminine business of choosing fabrics and trimmings, and still the difference between them was manifest in every trivial act and word.

There was no glance or start of recognition on the part of Alice Dunham when Harry Harding introduced his uncle in the evening, but he at once knew that there were not two Alices, but that his nephew's choice and the lady he had met in the restaurant were one and the same.

Her shy, yet cordial greeting, her gentle refined manners, her low sweet voice and graceful movements, all deepened the favorable impression the old gentleman had already received.

She sang for him, and her voice carried him back to the days when a fair young face blushed at his greeting, while in her manner was a respectful deference that was positively charming in this fast age, when years are disregarded by the youthful, and gray hairs are not, as of old, the royalty for the young to offer homage to.

The evening passed pleasantly till the tiny bell in the mantel clock chimed ten. Then Uncle Will. arose from his seat. No shadow of his morning quandary rested upon his pleasant face, as he advanced to Alice Dunham's seat. She rose to greet him, a little deeper rose than usual tinging her pure round cheek.

"Miss Alice," he said, making his old-fashioned bow, "my nephew, who is as dear to me as a son, tells me you have done him the honor of listening to his suit, but that you feared I might not be willing yet to have him seek a wife. Will you allow me to add my petition to his, and to beg that you will name an early day, when I may have the right to look upon you as a dearly loved niece?"

The girl's sweet lip quivered a little, as she said:

"You know that I am an orphan, alone—"

"My dear, dear child," said the old gentleman impulsively, throwing aside all formality, and taking her little hands in his own, "you will be alone no longer, when you give me the place of a father in your heart. As for Harry," and he laughed, "of course he won't count for much."

"Not if you try to cut him out," said that young gentleman, advancing.

A few more cordial words, and the gentlemen took their leave.

"I am so glad you like her," Harry said, when they were in the street again.

"She is a lady," was the emphatic reply—"not a polished up piece of vulgarity, but once a lady, always a lady."

And the old gentleman told his nephew his afternoon's experience.

* * *

—Borrowed thoughts, like borrowed money, only show the poverty of the borrower.

WIT AND HUMOR.

"I SUSPECT your brother's wife was a little out of temper last night," said an Iowa bar-tender to a fellow-citizen. "Why so?" "Because she came in here about ten o'clock, kicked over the table, drew a revolver on me, and led out her husband by the ear." "So; then I think that your suspicion as to her being a little out of temper is well founded."

THE citizens of Duluth, after a long struggle, have got a plot of ground for a cemetery; and now the officials of the place are disgusted because none of the inhabitants is public-spirited enough to become a corpse and start the cemetery. They now have hopes, however, of an early celebration, as a quack doctor has just settled in Duluth.

AN ALERT POLITICIAN.—"Your party is going to be beaten in the next election, and you'll be turned out of office," said a Democrat to a Whig, in the olden times. "I'd like to see an administration that can change sooner than I can change my politics!" was the triumphant reply.

A POET says,

"Oh, she was fair, divinely fair,
But Sorrow came, and left its traces there."

What "Sorrow" did with the rest of its harness the poet does not state.

IT is said that an Indian will sun-burn quicker than a white man. We don't know how that may be, but we are confident that an Indian will burn a son quicker than a white man will.

"A PART of your business will be to answer the door," said a lady to a new girl, just from Old Virginia. "'Deed, mist'ess, an' does your door *speak?*" exclaimed the astonished quadroon.

"ARE you not afraid that whiskey'll get into your head?" asked a stranger of a man he saw drinking at a bar. "No," said the toper, "this liquor's too weak to climb."

THEY call the opening of dead letters in the General Post-office at Washington, post mortem examinations, and the officer at the head of that department is known as the coroner.

CAN a young lady who refuses an offer, be justly accused of slight of hand? was the last question up for debate in the Keokonack Lyceum.

"WANTED—By a hearty boy of fourteen, a situation in an eating-house. *He understands the business.*" That is a well worded advertisement.

A DEACON in Indiana has four boys, the youngest of which is named Doxology, because he's the last of the hims.

THE reason that an old man is easier to rob than a young one, is because his gait is broken and his locks are few.

QUESTION for debate in the Slabtown Asylum—If a girl has a ringing laugh, must she necessarily be a belle?

NEXT to "the little busy bee" the bootblack furnishes the brightest example of improving the "shining hour."

THE chasm that swallows up enjoyment, and sometimes ingulfs friendship, is sarcasm.

WHEN a tailor gives a customer fits can he be justly charged with being revengeful?

BOOK-KEEPERS are said to be like chickens, because they have to scratch for a living.

WHEN may a chair be said to dislike a person? When it can't bear him.

THE drawing-room which ladies most dread is the office of a dentist.

A SPIRIT LEVEL—Drink that lowers man to the level of a beast.

THE true maid of honor is the girl who does not jilt her suitor.

THE sharp-shooters that are most dreaded are aching teeth.

MEN born blind can't be carpenters, because they never saw.

WHAT is smaller than a mite's mouth? Its tongue.

A MISER is far more for getting than for giving.

THE song of the humblebee is, "Hum, sweet hum."

AN idle man's favorite refreshment is loaf-cake.

AN old toper's last hope is an ale in his coffin.

CURRENT ITEMS.

AN unfortunate Baltimore gentleman, armed with a shot gun, went out in the woods in Harford county, Md., to shoot squirrels. Seeing what he supposed to be a large gray squirrel perched on the limb of a tree, he took aim and fired. Upon stooping down to pick up his squirrel, he was staggered by a peculiar blow upon the side of his nose, and before he could regain a perpendicular position, another stinging blow upon the left side of his nasal. He then discovered that the supposed squirrel was a hornet's nest, the occupants of which made a savage war upon him, and before he could beat a retreat his nose and right cheek were swollen to an enormous size. The incident required the unfortunate Baltimorean to remain in the house for three or four days.

IT seems that destructive floods have devastated portions of all quarters of the globe this year. The inhabitants of the valleys of Shilda and Amoor, in the Amoor Valley section of Russia, have recently been driven out of their houses by the rising floods, and have sought refuge in the mountains. Many Cossack settlements are completely swept away, leaving no vestige behind them.

IN the State of Illinois all forms of betting on elections are criminal offences, punishable by a fine of $1,000, or imprisonment for one year, or both, at the discretion of the court. In England it used to be a common form of bribery at elections to bet the voter that he would not vote for a certain candidate. The voter, of course, voted for the candidate mentioned, and thus won the bet.

A YOUNG man named Edwin Stiles, living in Pittsford, Vt., accidentally shot and killed himself, on Wednesday of last week; a few days before a farmer living in Cambridge, in the same State, shot himself dead because rain-storms and floods had badly injured his crops, and a boy sixteen years old, shot himself through the heart in the cemetery at Brattleboro', cause unknown.

THE death of a very aged female, believed to be the oldest person in Virginia, occurred lately near Brookneal, Campbell county, in that State. She was named Peggy Arrington, and was born in the city of Pittsburg in 1756. She was, therefore, nineteen years old at the beginning of the Revolutionary War, and one hundred and sixteen years old at the time of her death.

AN experiment was tried recently in Paris, to use an ostrich in place of a horse for drawing a carriage. A large ostrich, from the Acclimatization Society's Garden, was harnessed to a light carriage and driven by long reins by its trainer. The bird is said to have been very tractable, and to have passed by everything on the road very quietly.

THE horses attached to a steam fire-engine in Albany, N. Y., becoming frightened while being driven to a fire, recently, ran with the machine to the dock, and leaped in where the water was twelve feet deep. The driver swam ashore, but the horses, valued at $1,200, were held down by the weight of the engine and drowned.

A LADY suddenly disappeared a fortnight ago from her home in Greenfield, and it was feared that some ill had befallen her, but she came back a few days ago, and gave as a reason for her disappearance that she merely left home that "she might be better appreciated by her family when she returned."

A WOMAN committed suicide at Union City, Conn., on Tuesday of last week, by cutting her throat. She had been subject to fits of melancholy for nearly a year, and it was supposed she killed herself while out of her mind.

ALASKA is in a hubbub. The Indians at Cross Sound recently seized the steamer Rose, and held the passengers and crew as hostages for the payment of damages for the recent killing of some Indians by the Sitka garrison.

A TERRIBLE hurricane lately visited the Windward Islands, W. I., and inflicted frightful damage on shipping, houses, forests, crops, animals and inhabitants, many lives being lost.

EDWARD SWEAT, while at work on a raft in Oldtown, Me., was instantly killed by a stick of timber which was thrown from a saw-mill, near which the raft was lying, by a boy.

THE citizens of Chicago are actively and determinedly pushing up the authorities to the punishment of criminals, and especially to the hanging of murderers.

TENNESSEE has three thousand justices of the peace, "and yet," says a Nashville paper, "we have but little peace and less justice in the State."

WOOD-CHOPPERS and saw-mills are beginning to spread havoc among the big trees of the Yo Semite valley.

THE LITTLE DAUGHTER'S FIRST LETTER.

BY WILLIAM ROSS WALLACE.

Why, what is the matter? One moment her eyes
Bright as beams ever flashed from a June's morning skies,
And next rolling down her young soft cheeks the tears,
Yet there's naught in the darling that images fears.

And now a low laugh from her little red lips,
Glad as breezes that sing where the white lily dips;
And now she is whispering, "What pity! Ah me!"
And now all her ringlets are tossing in glee.

Well, what *is* the matter? you ask. I will tell,
Just as willing as Joy rings her light silver bell,
When the sunshine and clouds are together at play,
And the beams grow but brighter for clouds giving way.

It is dear little Mary's first long stay from home,
And O, how delightful, she feels, 'tis to roam
For a while through new scenes with her young cousins, who
In her heart dearer, dearer, and still dearer grew.

But a whole week has gone since she came, and she's got
The first letter she ever had—from home's own spot—
And the letter's her mother's! her *mother's!* what bliss
Was the darling's, while giving it kiss after kiss!

Now she reads it—it tells her so many sweet things:
How father and mother are glad while she springs
In such joy with her cousins on play's sunny track,
But they miss her *so* much, and she soon must come back.

And her brothers and sisters, whenever at play,
They will stop all at once, thinking of her away;
And the youngest refuses to join them—"O, O, deare dear!
Me wants Sissie Mary adain wid us here!"

And old Jowler, the pet dog, seems also to pine,
And as if in answer will give a sad whine,
Then goes trotting about in long searching—'tis plain
That he, too, is not happy till she's there again.

And just so runs the letter, and so just o'er and o'er
Mary reads—see a sweet anxious girl at the door
Calling on her to come out to play—"Yes," she cries,
With a bound, and then, while drying quickly her eyes,
Whispers low, "Well, it's nice for a while away to roam,
But I'm sure, after all, *now* I'd rather be home!"

A BONE of CONTENTION;

—OR—

The Waldemar Succession.

By MRS. HARRIET LEWIS,

AUTHOR OF "THE HAMPTON MYSTERY," "THE BAILIFF'S SCHEME," "THE LADY OF KILDARE," "THE OLD LIFE'S SHADOWS," "A DARING GAME," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

SUCCESS OF BING'S SCHEMING.

No misgivings of their peril entered the minds of Mrs. Early and Honor Glint as they were driven away from the Red House at a furious pace in the hired cab driven by Darrel Moer's exultant valet. They were both preoccupied with indignant thoughts of their strange reception by Mrs. Glint and her daughter. They both believed that the lying telegram that had summoned them to Bolton had emanated from the petty malice of Miss Milner, and neither Mrs. Early nor Honor once thought of Darrel Moer in connection therewith.

Bing's plans had prospered even beyond his hopes. He had prepared for some difficulty in the way of his success, but had encountered none. He was a man of shrewdness and sagacity, and had foreseen that Honor would come to Bolton by the first train upon the receipt of his skillfully worded telegram. He knew that Sir Hugh Tregaron would not allow her to travel without other protection than that afforded by the presence of her maid, and he had half expected to see the young Baronet with her. He experienced a keen sense of relief when he discovered that her travelling companion was a lady, recognizing Mrs. Early as the lady who had called for Honor at Miss Brown's cottage at Southport, and taken the young lady away with her.

He had not been able to guess whether Honor and her friend and maid would proceed directly to a hotel or to the Red House, but he had been prepared for either course.

He had not dared to play the cabman at the railway station, nor yet at the hotel, fearing the keen eyes of the police. The cab being borrowed, he dared not risk bringing trouble upon its owner. The game which he had undertaken to play required the exercise of the utmost ingenuity and cunning, in order that no clue whatever might be left for the police to seize upon, in the efforts which they would undoubtedly make to trace Miss Glint.

"I'm playing a game single-handed against the whole police force of England, including detectives, all backed by Sir Hugh Tregaron," thought Bing, as he again flourished his whip and drove onward away from the lights of the town. "I haven't been idle since I arrived at Manchester yesterday. I'm not afraid to risk every penny I own that I'll outwit them all."

He drove on at an increasing rate of speed.

Meanwhile, the occupants of the cab were silent for some minutes, sitting in a profound darkness which neither heeded in their mental agitation.

Honor was the first to speak.

"I am sorry, Mrs. Early, that you should have been subjected to such an insult tonight. And what will Lady Thaxter say? What will Sir Hugh say?"

"I shall telegraph to Lady Thaxter the first thing in the morning," said Mrs. Early cheerfully. "I shall merely say that we shall be home at three o'clock; and we can tell her our story when we return home, you know, my dear Miss Glint. We have been put to some inconvenience, it is true, by this sudden journey, but it is worth something to find out such people as Mrs. Glint and her daughter. They have digged a pit between you and them now which cannot be crossed."

"Is not the air quite close in the cab here, Mrs. Early?" asked Honor. "How dark it is! The blinds must be all up."

She tried to lower them, but they were fast.

"Never mind," said Mrs. Earl. "The air is very chilly, and there's quite a wind. But I fancy our cabman must be intoxicated. How fast he drives! At this rate, we shall soon be at the hotel."

They were silent a few minutes, during which the cab rattled over the long country road, and then Honor again attempted to open the blinds. Failing in this, she resumed her seat, saying uneasily:

"We should be at the hotel by this time, I think. Can the man have been drinking while we were at the Red House, Mrs. Early, and can he have forgotten the name of our hotel?"

Mrs. Early sprang up in the darkness, and kneeling upon the cushions of the front seat, rapped smartly with her knuckles upon the pane of glass which intervened between her and the driver. Bing paid no attention to this sign of uneasiness, but drove the faster. Mrs. Early groped about with her hand for the check string, found it, and pulled it vigorously.

The amateur cabman slackened his horse's speed now, and leaned forward with a hiccough, while Mrs. Early lowered the intervening window, and looked out at him and beyond him at the dusky country road.

"Where are you taking us?" she demanded, in a voice of alarm. "This is not the way to the hotel. We are out in the open country."

"Wha'—wha' 'f that?" asked Bing, in the husky tones of inebriation, which he feigned with the skill of a genuine actor. "Wha' want? Lem me go. Gee up, there! Click!"

Away sped the horse again, under the impetus of the whip, which Bing flourished with the air of a ring-master. He rolled to and fro on his box with apparently dangerous looseness.

"My dear child, what shall we do?" cried Mrs. Early, closing the window. "The man is certainly drunk. He employed the time of our absence in the Red House in drinking. See! He is almost helpless. What are we to do?"

Honor arose and looked out of the front window. The driver's ample coat screened its greater portion, but she could see the cab lamp, which was burning very low and indistinctly, and she could see also that they were beyond the town. There were no street lamps, no houses, out here, but she caught sight of trees as they were rushed onward.

"We *are* out of the town, Mrs. Early," exclaimed the girl. "The man is taking us to the northward, or to the north-east. This road leads to Four Lane Ends. We must stop him. There's no use in screaming for help. The road is lonely, and we should be far away before any one could reach the street from one of the occasional houses."

Mrs. Early lowered the window again.

"My good man," she said, in a tone of expostulation, "you are going the wrong way. You must turn and go back the way you have come. We wish to go to our hotel."

"Wim—wimmen always wantin' somethin'," muttered Bing, apparently in a state of hopeless intoxication. "Go—got any bran'y?"

"No, no. Do you hear? You are to take us back the way we have come!" cried Mrs. Early.

"Wo—won't do it! Never turn back for nobody, no, not I," hiccoughed Bing, in a voice that was rapidly becoming uproarious. "'Champagne Charley is my name,' 'Tommy Dodd—Tommy Dodd!' Gee up, ole feller. G'long. Click! We'll ride all night till the broad daylight, and go home with the gals in the morning. When daylight doth appear—'pear. G'way there. G'lang!"

He uttered a hoarse yell, and reeled in his seat more loosely than ever.

"My dear," said Mrs. Early, thoroughly freightened, "we shall be run away with. The fellow is nearly helpless. He is likely to fall off his box at any minute, and then what will become of us? We must get out."

"We can apply at the nearest house for a conveyance back to the town," said Honor. "Yes, we must get out. But will he stop long enough to allow us to descend?"

"He must."

Mrs. Early pulled the driver's sleeve.

He turned, but the upper portion of his body could not be seen by her, owing to the smallness of the window and his proximity to it.

"Wha' wanted now?" said Bing.

"We want you to stop and let us out," said the lady, in a tone of command. "Are you sober enough to understand? We shall report you to the Bolton police to-morrow unless you stop immediately."

"Want my money. Don't cheat me out my money. Gim me my money, and I'll let you out."

Mrs. Early withdrew from her purse two silver half-crowns and gave them to him.

Bing looked sharply out from under his slouched hat. The road was very narrow, and bordered by ditches on either side. He knew that Honor had entered the cab last, and he knew upon which side she was seated. With a great deal of noise and muttering, he drew up his horse suddenly, close beside one of the roadside ditches, taking care that the steep wide ditch should be upon Honor's side of the cab. Mrs. Early was thus forced to alight first.

The lady had scarcely set foot upon the ground, and Honor had scarcely arisen to descend after her, when Bing with an uproarious yell cracked his whip again, sending his horse forward at a ten-foot bound, with an impetus that flung Honor back upon her seat and slammed the door shut.

The horse, cab, driver and passenger went whirling away into the darkness.

Mrs. Early ran after the cab, screaming and imploring, but her shrieks were wasted upon the empty air.

The cab was soon out of sight, but Mrs. Early ran for a full mile along the lonely road, expecting to discover Honor, or the wreck of the cab, but she found neither.

Exhausted at last, and thoroughly panic-stricken, she turned into the yard of a lonely and neglected looking farm-house and knocked for admittance. The hour was yet early, but the inmates were gone to bed. Mrs. Early roused them up, obtained admittance, and told her story. A farmer's lad volunteered to go in pursuit of the cab, and after some delay mounted a sorry looking horse, and set out at an ordinary jog, which, however, was the best that the poor beast could compass.

Mrs. Early waited in the farm-house kitchen in an agony of impatience for his return.

He was absent some two hours, but came back at the end of that period alone.

"Did you overtake the cab?" cried Mrs. Early, running out into the house yard to meet him. "Where is the young lady?"

"Seen naught o' no cab," said the lad. "But oi met a mon as said a cab went past Four Lane Ends, up Holcombe Moor way, and the driver was drunk's a fiddler. Cab got half-hour start, ma'am."

Mrs. Early was plunged into the most embarrassing perplexity. What should she do? The farmer's wife offered her a bed for the night, but she could not sleep while Honor's life was in peril. She thought of the young girl as in imminent peril of being thrown from the cab and killed; she thought of her as exposed to the rudeness and perhaps the insults of a drunken driver; and she wrung her hands in anguish and despair.

The farmer advised her to return to Bolton and inform the police, and send out swift mounted messengers in quest of the cab. He offered Mrs. Early transportation to the town, and she gladly accepted it. The lad proceeded to harness the horse he had ridden to an old spring wagon, and a little after ten o'clock of the dark March night, Mrs. Early was being transported to Bolton at a much slower rate of speed than that indulged in by Bing.

On arriving in the town she proceeded directly to her hotel, rewarded and dismissed the farmer's lad, and obtained an immediate interview with the hotel proprietor, informing him of her adventure upon the road, and of her wish that messengers should be sent in all haste in search of Miss Glint.

"It shall be done, Madam," said the proprietor. "The drunken rascal must have been stopped before this, or the young lady has been allowed to alight. We shall find her upon the road somewhere near Holcombe Moor, making her way back in this direction. Give yourself no uneasiness, Madam. Your young friend shall be restored to you before morning."

He hurried away to dispatch mounted men in search of the young lady.

Mrs. Early wearily ascended to the little private parlor.

She found Honor's maid dozing before the fire. A small table was spread with a tempting supper, and the tea-kettle was on the hob, in full steam. Lucky sprang up, as Mrs. Early, pale and haggard-eyed, came into the room, and came forward to remove the lady's wrappings.

"Where is Miss Honor?" she asked, with an expectant glance at the door. "Will she stay at the Red House all night?"

Mrs. Early groaned heavily.

"The poor child!" she cried. "Oh, Lucky, Mrs. Glint was not ill. The telegram was a sham. Miss Milner must have sent it. And poor Honor— Oh, what if she should be killed! At this very moment she may be lying dead in a roadside ditch!"

The maid uttered a stifled shriek.

"Miss Honor! Miss Honor may be lying dead in a roadside ditch!"

"Yes. The cabman was drunk, and drove us out into the country, instead of bringing us back to the hotel. I commanded him to stop, and he did stop barely long enough to allow me to spring out, but before Honor could follow me, he had whipped up and was gone. If any harm comes to her, what shall I say to Sir Hugh?"

"It's very singular," said Lucky, growing white. "Oh, Mrs. Early, are you sure that the cabman was drunk?"

"Yes, girl—very sure. I know he was drunk. His actions and words were those of a drunken person."

"But the false telegram and Miss Honor's disappearance may have some connection with each other," said Lucky shrewdly. "I'm afraid it's some game of Mr. Moer's to get her into his power. I'm afraid we shall never see our sweet Miss Honor again!"

The suggestion was as fuel to the flame of Mrs. Early's anguish. The idea looked possible, but she refused to entertain it.

"If Honor is not found by morning, I'll telegraph to Lady Thaxter," said the lady, "but I cannot alarm them until I am forced to do so. Brew me some strong tea, Lucky. I shall not go to bed until Miss Honor comes."

The maid made the tea, and Mrs. Early drank of it. Then she sat down by the window, through which the chill air crept, and waited in a silence that grew more and more terrible as the minutes passed and deepened into hours.

Lucky crouched on the hearth rug, silent also, and also sleepless, but alert to every sound in the corridor without.

And so the long night passed.

It was daybreak when the hotel proprietor knocked at the door, and came in with a face which was sufficiently indicative of bad news.

"The young lady is not found," he said. "The cab was not seen after entering upon Holcombe Moor. The police are on the alert, Madam, and have made an investigation within the hour of the various cabs of the town. There is not a cab missing from Bolton, nor has a single circumstance been discovered to throw suspicion on any cabman as having been concerned in this rascally outrage. The cab which my clerk called for you at your request last evening, could not have been the same cab in which you left the Red House."

"But it must have been," said Mrs. Early. "I told the cabman to wait until I should come out or discharge him, and I found him waiting when we came out. We were not in the house twenty minutes."

"The cabman who took you to the Red House, Madam, says you sent out an Irish servant to pay and discharge him. He returned to the town, and picked up a fare by the way, as he has already proved. He was in the ranks a half-hour afterward, and was then summoned to this hotel by the clerk to convey an old gentleman to the house of a friend. He waited there a full hour, and then drove home for the night. His owner proves that the cab was returned and the horse stabled by ten o'clock. The cab in which you left the Red House was another cab than that which you first employed. The second cab must have been called by a servant of Mrs. Glint."

"But it was not. I know that it was not."

The proprietor looked puzzled.

"There's some mystery in the business which I can't fathom," he said. "You had best see one of the police-officers, Madam. But first I will ask you what officer Bounce asked me—has the young lady any enemies?"

Mrs. Early started, but could not reply.

Lucky Banner looked up, her round face flushing, her eyes full of tears.

"Yes, sir," she exclaimed, "my young mistress, who would not harm a crawling worm, and who is all goodness and sweetness, has enemies. She has one enemy who hates her enough to kill her. And she is dead! I know she is dead! They have flung her body into the canal or the river. She's dead—she's dead!"

Her wild and frenzied wail rang through the room.

"I'm afraid the girl may have spoken the truth," cried Mrs. Early, springing up. "The whole thing may have been a preconcerted plan, telegram and all! Send a police-officer to me immediately. Let a telegram be sent to London. Stay—I will write it!"

She found writing materials in a table near, and wrote a brief but comprehensive message to Lady Thaxter, stating the facts of Honor's disappearance, adding that she would write by first post.

"Please send this at once, sir," said Mrs. Early, giving it into the hands of the hotel proprietor. "Let the search for Miss Glint be kept up. Send some one to the Red House to make inquiries in regard to the Irish servant who dismissed my cab, and who evidently called another cab in its stead. I will pay any reward for Miss Glint's recovery and restoration to me. I shall remain here until she is found, or her fate is settled!"

The proprietor took the message and withdrew.

"I'm afraid you are right, Lucky," said Mrs. Early, when she was again alone with Honor's despairing maid. "I begin to think there has been some conspiracy against Honor, and to fear that we may never see her again. Oh, God in Heaven, where is she now?"

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A DREADFUL EXPERIENCE.

Aye, where was Honor?

She had fallen back upon her seat in the cab, as we have said, and the door had slammed shut, with the sudden impetus given to the vehicle by the great bound of the frightened horse, in the very moment succeeding that in which Mrs. Early had sprung out upon the lonely road.

For a minute, perhaps, Honor remained where she had fallen, half stunned by the shock of her downfall, while the driver yelled and whipped up his steed, in what appeared an uproarious paroxysm of drunkenness. Then the girl sprang up, and caught at the arm of Bing through the still open window, crying out:

"Stop! I am still in here. Let me out!"

Bing chose to carry out still further the part he had assumed. It was not his purpose yet to enlighten the young girl as to his real character.

"Wha'?" he exclaimed stupidly, half turning around, but not relaxing his speed. "Wha' ye want? Ye both got out. Ye know ye did. Don't bo'r. Don't bo'r me, I say. Lem me 'lone."

He jerked himself free from the girl's grasp, and applied himself to the task of quickening his horse's speed to a dead run.

Honor's hand trembled upon the door. She was tempted to open the door and spring out, but a timely remembrance of the deep ditches restrained her. She thought of Mrs. Early with a pang for her friend's distress. She believed that the horse was beyond the control of the apparently drunken driver, and that the cab was liable at any moment to be upset. She murmured a prayer softly between her pale lips.

When they were beyond the sight and hearing of Mrs. Early, Bing ceased his outcries and lapsed into a state of what Honor believed to be drunken stupidity. Yet he lashed the horse now and then, keeping him at a rate of speed which rendered it impossible for Honor to effect her escape.

At length, as they approached Holcombe Moor, the weary beast began to flag, and the young girl, resolving to make no more appeals to the supposed cabman, tried to open the door. It was quite dark within the vehicle, and for some minutes she groped in vain for the fastenings. When she found them, she discovered that they were peculiarly hard to open. By dint of hard work, she presently pushed open the door, and at the same minute the vehicle came to a stand-still at a point where several roads met.

Honor sprang out upon the ground.

At the same moment the driver leaped from his box, uttering a low, peculiar whistle.

A man who had been lying upon the ground in the darkness uprose from the midst of the furze, with an answering whistle.

"All right!" said Bing.

"All right!" said the man, who was the owner of horse and cab, and the friend of Darrel Moer's valet.

Bing pressed five gold pieces in the cabman's hand, and slammed the door of the empty cab. The driver climbed lightly up into his place, turned, and drove back toward Bolton by another route than that by which Bing had come.

All this had transpired so swiftly that Honor had not time to comprehend what had occurred before the cab and its veritable driver had departed.

She was alone upon a desolate stretch of common, under the dun gloomy sky of the March night—alone with a man whom her awakening instincts now told her was her enemy.

She looked at him with wild eyes.

His ragged beard and wig disguised him beyond her knowledge. His long frieze overcoat, which came to his heels, and his slouched hat, perfected his disguise. But although she did not know him, she was afraid of him. Her heart seemed to rise to her throat. Without a word to him, she screamed loudly to the departing cabman, and ran in the direction the vehicle had taken.

With giant strides Bing overtook her. He seized her arm in a fierce grip.

"Who are you?" cried Honor, panting. "Why have you brought me here?"

The man did not answer. He dragged her after him over the furze across the dreary moor.

"Speak to me!" exclaimed the girl. "Are—are you going to kill me? Is—is it Darrel?"

She knew now that the man had feigned drunkenness—that the lying telegram she had received, and which had brought her to Bolton, had not been sent by Clarette Milner—that a trap had been laid for her by an unscrupulous enemy, and that she had fallen into it.

What enemy had she but Darrel Moer? She believed this man to be Moer in disguise.

Bing did not answer her. She took his silence for assent.

"You have brought me out here—to kill me!" said the girl, struggling, and raising her wild eyes to heaven. "Oh, Darrel, how have I ever harmed you? Be merciful to me. Oh, Heaven pity and save me!"

The man uttered an oath and dragged her over the lonely common, regardless of her prayers. Honor made no further appeal. Her brave young soul gathered all its forces to meet this peril dauntlessly and calmly. She could die, but she would not give her murderer the pitiful triumph of her groans and anguish.

"Let me walk," she said. "I am no longer afraid. The pangs of death are brief, and beyond them is Life. But for you, Darrel, for you there will be the second death. Better my lot than yours."

The man suffered her to walk beside him, but he did not relax his grip upon her arm.

Presently a glimmer of light as from a lantern down amid the furze caught their eyes. Bing hurried her toward it. They soon reached it, and found themselves in close proximity to a gipsy wagon of a superior type, being a very neat and pretty house on wheels.

There was a door at the front and another at the rear of this travelling dwelling, buckets and baskets hung under it attached to hooks, and there were two windows, which were shuttered. A pair of powerful horses were harnessed to the wagon, and seemed impatient to begin or resume their course, whichever it might be. Bing came to a halt beside the wagon.

"Gusty," he called, in a low, guarded, yet penetrating voice.

Honor started. She knew that her captor was not Darrel Moer.

There was a rustling in the furze on the other side of the wagon, and a girl of some fifteen years came around to them, and picked up the lantern from the ground, its light falling upon her.

This girl was Bing's own daughter, and had been named Augusta. She was a miniature copy of himself. He had a large family living somewhere in Lancashire, and he was wont to visit it at his convenience. This girl was the eldest of his children, and his favorite. She had inherited his shrewdness, cunning, and secretiveness, and was an invaluable aid to him in his designs. She was his partial confidant in his present undertaking, and was devoted to his evil interests.

Relieved of her worst fears—that her captor was Darrel Moer—Honor looked at this girl in the hope of seeing some gleam of kindness or pity in her face.

She might as well have sought for pity in a stone.

Gusty Bing was an overgrown, swarthy creature, with black eyes and coarse black hair, cut short at her neck. She wore high boots, a scarlet petticoat, and a blue bodice. A short scarlet cloak was flung back over her shoulders, and a scarlet hood hung loosely at her neck. She looked like a gipsy, and Honor thought her really one.

"All ready, dad?" asked the girl, in a husky voice.

"All ready, Gusty," he answered. "Show the lady to her lodgings."

Gusty ran around to the rear end of the wagon and lowered a flight of steps. Then she unlocked the rear door, throwing it open.

"Come this way, Miss," she said. "Here you are, as comfortable as at the Victory. Come along."

But Honor refused to stir.

"Who are you?" she asked Bing. "You are this girl's father. Who then?"

"Gusty," said Bing, "step this way. Guard the girl while I tell her who I am."

Gusty came back with the lantern, and composedly drew a small pistol from her bosom, pointing its dark muzzle at the prisoner.

"If you try to run, I'll shoot!" she warned Honor. "Dad, go ahead. I can take care of her."

Bing took off his slouched hat, and flung it on the ground. Gusty threw the light of the lantern full upon him, and Honor regarded him. He pulled off his shaggy wig, his long and ragged beard, and flung them also upon the earth. And lastly he removed his long frieze coat, and stood before her completely transformed, yet as unrecognizable as before.

He was now the very ideal of an ordinary gipsy. He was swarthy of visage; his hair was black as jet and cropped short, and he had gone to the length of putting gold hoops in his ears. He wore a suit of black velveteen, somewhat shabby, as if it had been long in wear, rings on his dirty fingers, now ungloved, and tall top boots, into which the legs of his trowsers were thrust.

Honor regarded him in puzzled amazement. There was a familiar gleam in his eyes, and she knew that she had seen him before. Who would naturally abet Darrel Moer in any schemes against her? His man Bing. Who had made an attempt to rob her of her marriage certificate at Southport? Bing. And although his transformation was so complete that her instinct rather than her eyes guided her to a conclusion, yet suddenly flashed upon Honor the full conviction that this man was Darrel Moer's valet and confederate. She spoke his name involuntarily.

The seeming gipsy showed his white teeth.

"See here, Miss," he said. "Is life dear to you?"

"It is as dear to me as to others," said Honor calmly. "Do you mean to kill me?"

"I've got my orders," said Bing ambiguously. "You are not wanted in London at present, Miss. If you will go with me peaceable, I'll treat you with respect and let you go free in due time. But you must promise to give no alarm while on our journey, to raise no outcry, to appeal to no one whomsoever, to make no attempt at escape."

"And if I refuse to promise all this?"

The pretended gipsy showed his teeth again.

"I am the agent of a man who scruples at nothing," he said. "If you refuse to give me the promise I demand, I shall leave this common immediately, but I shall leave your lifeless corpse among the furze. Mr. Moer is in London. The deed can never be traced home to him or me. Speak! Take your choice. Will you go peaceably and living, or will you stay here dead?"

Honor scarcely needed time for consideration, but she took it. She reflected that if Bing meant to kill her he would do so now, and not be at the risk of transporting her across the country. She believed that she was threatened only with imprisonment in some lonely spot. Trusting in God and in Sir Hugh Tregaron, of whom she thought now, she believed she might be rescued from the hands of her enemies. It only needed that she should be brave, steadfast, and patient.

There was no possibility of present escape; that she knew. Making the best of her situation, she replied:

"I promise what you require."

"It is well," said Bing. "Follow Gusty into the wagon."

Honor mounted the steps after the girl and entered the little house on wheels.

It was small, of course, but was larger than Honor had supposed. The floor was covered with a pretty Brussels carpet of minute pattern, and a divan covered with chintz ran around the walls. The windows were covered with Holland shades and draped with damask. There were various conveniences upon the walls—a mirror, a rack for dishes, and other articles. The wooden ceiling was painted blue, and so also were the walls.

This establishment, horses and all, Bing had hired of a gipsy chief whom he had encountered at Manchester, leaving a deposit of money that fully covered its value. He had sent for his daughter to come to him at Manchester, and had seen her there that very morning, and ordered her to have the wagon at Holcombe Moor by eight o'clock in the evening. This the girl had been able to effect, having herself driven the horses and wagon from their camping ground some five miles from Holcombe Moor.

The girl pointed out the advantages of the dwelling with considerable pride.

"You and me is to occupy this here," she remarked, hanging up the lantern on a hook in the ceiling. "If you keep your promise and act half-way civil, you'll find me easy to get along with. If you try the other way, you'll find me a regular cat. I tell you fair to start with, and it's your own fault if you come to grief. Now there's one thing that's got to be done. If you don't do it peaceable, you'll have to be left under the furze, that's all. That complexion and that hair have got to be changed. Dad has fixed a walnut dye, or some such thing, which will make your hair and face like mine. It'll wash off, but you've got to put it on and keep it on while on this journey."

The girl spoke with decision, having received her orders from her father.

Honor received the proposition with repugnance.

"What if it should never come off!" she exclaimed. "I can't do it. I have given my promise not to attempt to escape. This disguise is not needed."

"Dad's the best judge of that," said Gusty coolly. "Here are the bottles—two of 'em. The lightest is for your complexion, the darkest for your hair. Dad's beside the wagon. I'll call him if you refuse. Look here. You hold out your hand and try the dye."

She caught up the bottle containing the darker fluid, and snatching Honor's hand, poured a quantity upon it. The delicate palm was stained with a blackness like that of a negro. Honor looked at it in dismay.

Gusty lifted a lid in the divan, and displayed toilet appurtenances. Honor hastened to wash her hand, and the dye came off, leaving the hand with its pristine beauty and whiteness.

"You see?" exclaimed Gusty. "Now this darkest dye is to go on your hair. The paler dye is for your face. Will you let me put them on or no?"

She stepped to the door, as if to summon her father in the event of Honor's refusal.

The young lady tried both dyes upon her hands, and fully assured herself of their harmless qualities, and signified her assent.

Gusty opened the door. Bing sat on the steps outside.

"It's all right, dad," she said. "She hears to reason. I'll show you another fine gipsy girl in the morning. We can travel on, if you're ready."

Bing withdrew the key from the lock and passed it in to her. Gusty locked the door on the inner side. Bing picked up his discarded garments, rolled them up into a small parcel, and stowed it in a locker under his seat in front of the wagon. The horses were tethered to a stake that had been stuck loosely in the ground. He freed them, mounted the box, seized the lines, and drove away to the eastward.

Within the wagon the work of transforming Honor into a seeming gipsy progressed. Gusty produced a sponge, and dipped it into the lighter dye and passed it over the pure, fair face of the prisoner, over the rounded throat, the arms, wrists, and hands. The result was a delicate olive tint, which looked natural.

"Your eyes are black, thank fortune," said Bing's daughter. "If they'd been blue now, I don't know what we should have done."

She unbound Honor's pale gold hair, unfastened the thick braids, and let the whole fall in a golden shower over Honor's shoulders. Then, with a sponge, slowly and carefully she applied the darker liquid to Honor's hair, transforming it to a glossy and jet black.

The unique, bizarre beauty of Honor had given place to a brunette loveliness. It would have been hard to recognize in this gipsy-like beauty the fair, golden-haired young bride of Darrel Moer.

"That is finished," said Gusty, with a sigh of relief, as she deposited the bottles in the lockers. "You must put fresh dye on your face and hands every day—especially on your hands. Any moisture will remove this dye. Are you hungry?"

She opened another locker in the divan and brought forth cold meat, delicate biscuits in tin boxes, and various other refreshments. Honor declined them all.

"I want nothing," she said. "Tell me, where are you taking me?"

"When you get there you'll find out," responded Gusty, putting away the larger share of the food, yet reserving a portion for her immediate consumption. "Just now you're on a long ja'nt. Dad is running the machine. All you've got to do is to sit still and take things easy. You're in powerful hands that are able to hold you."

At this moment Bing slid back a small panel in the front door behind his box, and whispered:

"We're out on the highway. Douse your glim, girl. We must be forty miles away from here by daybreak, and we must not be seen while we are going."

He closed the panel. Gusty extinguished the light of the lantern, and flung herself down upon the divan and went to sleep. Honor sat down upon the opposite divan, but she could not sleep. All night long she sat there in the darkness, her black eyes glowing, her thoughts endeavoring to probe her future. And the idea grew upon her that she did not know all she had to expect—that terrors, darkness, and perils were yawning in her pathway. Perhaps the doom she had dreaded that night on Holcombe Moor waited for her like a crouching demon in the place to which she was going!

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

* * *

—The opponents of any idea, founded on reason and common-sense, are like men striking among live coals; they may scatter them, but only to make them kindle and blaze spots which otherwise they would never have touched.

THE NEW YORK LEDGER

ROBERT BONNER, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12, 1872.

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The Libeler.

If of all wretches there be one the most execrable—if of all villains there be one the most villanous—if of all men who disgrace the image of their Maker there be one the most despicable, it is the wanton, wicked libeler. His hand is against every man; and if not the hand, the judgment and sentiment of every right-minded man must be against him. He condemns others recklessly and unjustly; he himself should be condemned deliberately and with justice.

The law affords but uncertain and inadequate remedy for the mischiefs of libelous publications. Journals have become so powerful that prosecuting officers and even courts are afraid of them, even when they are known to be in the wrong. Again, there are always liable to be more or less men on every jury, whose verdict, in a case of libel, would be influenced and almost wholly governed by their partisan or personal sympathies and affinities. These remarks are equally applicable to civil and criminal prosecutions.

Of civil actions, moreover, it may always be said that no amount of damages, even if recovered and collected, furnishes anything like a sufficient remuneration for an unfounded assault upon character. And where a criminal prosecution happens to be successful, the punishment inflicted is usually so remote and so slight, as to bear a ridiculous disproportion to the wrong for which it is inflicted.

What then shall be done with the libeler? "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." It is not likely that He who gave the Commandment, "Thou shall not bear false witness against thy neighbor," will allow those to go unpunished, ultimately, who violate the law which He has established.

Much, too, might be done by an enlightened and improved public sentiment, to diminish the prevalence of libelous publications. The libeler should be more pointedly rebuked—he should be universally ostracized by society.

It has not been uncommon, especially at the South, for libelers to be caned or killed. But violence is to be deprecated. There are few offences, however, more calculated to provoke it, or which seem to go further, in the public estimation, to extenuate it, than the perpetration of libel.

Lovers' Quarrels.

The correspondence of the *Ledger* shows—what everybody knew before, but these letters remind us of it constantly afresh—how very common are quarrels between lovers. They admonish us too, how destructive to the happiness of the parties these quarrels often are. They generally arise from unconsidered trifles.

"Alas! how light a cause may move
Dissension between hearts that love!
* * * * * * *
A something light as air—a look,
A word unkind or wrongly taken—
Oh! love that tempests never shook,
A breath, a touch like this hath shaken."

The breach once occasioned by over-sensitiveness, is kept open by a false pride. Both hearts are aching, but both are too proud to explain, or to make the first move toward a reconciliation. And so the rupture is continued, and those once apparently inseparable become parted for life—taking widely divergent paths, but which are alike shrouded in perpetual gloom.

An attempt is made to heal the wound of disappointed love by an alliance with some one else; but how often matches made under such circumstances prove unhappy, almost innumerable letters to the *Ledger* bear witness.

If lovers would practice more forbearance and patience, more reasonable consideration toward each other, such differences might generally be prevented; or, if they occur, be readily terminated. And they ought to be prevented or ended. It is absurd to wreck an argosy of hopes, and those the hopes of a lifetime, on such tiny breakers. Well might the poet whom we have already quoted, in philosophic mood, give the wholesome advice:

"O you, that have the charge of Love,
Keep him in rosy bondage bound,
As in the Fields of Bliss above
He sits, with flowerets fettered round.
Loose not a tie that round him clings,
Nor ever let him use his wings;
For even an hour, a minute's flight
Will rob the plumes of half their light.
Like that celestial bird—whose nest
Is found beneath far eastern skies—
Whose wings, though radiant when at rest,
Lose all their glory when he flies!"

An Old Lady.

In the Vice-Chancellor's Court, in England, an application was made last month for an order of appointment of a person to convey real estate vested in ANN WALLACE, of Glasgow, represented to be a centenarian; and in support of the application was read an affidavit of a gentleman who had acted as her agent for thirty years, and had in his possession a certificate of her birth, that she entered her *one hundred and third* year on the first of July!

TWIN MOUNTAIN HOUSE LIFE.

BY HENRY WARD BEECHER.

What do folks do for weeks and weeks at a hotel in the White Mountains? Here come the most active men in the land, upon a vacation. It would do you good to see, when one sets his mind upon it, how lazy he can be, or how busy all day in doing nothing! Here are lawyers, bankers, ministers, manufacturers, who are noted for enterprise and restless industry. See them sitting on the veranda, amusing themselves with things which not one of them can remember in half an hour. At this *Twin Mountain House* breakfast may be had from six until ten o'clock. Few except those going off on some expedition take the early hours. Between eight and nine is the fashionable hour. Then come lounging, story-telling, croquet, ten-pins, billiards, boating, a tramp into the woods, a ride, etc. Some take a part of the morning for study, or reading, or correspondence; but these are exceptions. Men do not come here to work. They have earned a right to lay fallow for a month. It is good for the brain. They will make more work in ten months than in twelve, who use two months in a year for genial, jovial relaxation. All sorts of people meet together, every side of politics, all shades of religious belief, all classes in society; and yet it is surprising to see how social, harmonious and agreeable all are. I have heard no disputes, not even in discussing politics; no bitterness—even when Christians are talking about churches and doctrines.

On Sunday morning there are religious services in the parlor, and at night social singing. Almost every Sunday there is present some who are skilled in the musical art, and who lend themselves to the pleasure and edification of the company with willing grace. Men and women, while seeking enjoyment, have not been quite unmindful of doing. Some six or seven hundred dollars have been raised by Sunday collections, and by solicited personal contributions, for the benefit of the neighborhood. A Sunday-school library has been bought; the beginning has been made of a parochial library, for the use of the pastor of the small Baptist church in this vicinity and for teachers. A donation has been made for the support of the pastor. So that selfishness has not reigned, and the guests will not leave the place worse than they found it. This Twin Mountain House is exceedingly well kept, and has a home-like air to it, which renders it peculiarly agreeable. Not so large as the Glen, or the Profile, it has a charm all its own which more than makes up any advantage from fashion or numbers.

The hunting in this region is very good. Indeed, I never knew a place where so much hunting was necessary to obtain any game. Some trout yet remain in the mountain streams, especially in those that are inaccessible. The sons of the gun and the rod need not come here with large expectations. By the summer of 1873, one can come to the door of the *Twin Mountain House* by railway, and then what shall we do? Last season, and even more this summer, the house has been crowded, packed, running over full. What will become of the people next year? For the flow of people to the White Mountains is as little likely to dry up as the Mississippi River.

But I must make my annual report to the *Ledger* on the subject of the Hay Fever, or as it is now called by Prof. Wyman, the Autumnal Catarrh. His book is the only treatise on this subject in Europe or America worthy of the subject. It would seem as if this peculiar disease was increasing from year to year. No cause can be assigned, and no medical treatment has ever produced any good results. Now and then one is cured, but the same treatment applied to others utterly fails. The great discovery in this matter is, that one can be free from it by resorting to certain localities during the six weeks or two months of its career.

There have been here about twenty-five refugees, and in every case there has been a substantial exemption from the disorder, so that you are not to imagine a hospital, or a dreary hotel full of people armed with handkerchiefs and sneezing in chorus, or solos. This is a bright and cheery place. The refugees, escaping their enemy, live in a perpetual triumph, and are a gay and joyous set. It is almost worth the having the Hay Fever to meet so many pleasant people. When it is considered how many resort to the Profile House for the sake of exemption, to the Glen House and the Alpine, to Waumbeck, at Jefferson, to Whitefield village, Littleton, and especially to the beautiful Bethlehem—in all probably several hundred—one gets a lively idea of the extent to which this not dangerous but excessively annoying distemper prevails.

Meanwhile, another year warrants me in saying that a resort hither is almost a certain relief, not one per cent. of patients failing to obtain essential, if not entire relief. We can go out into the sun, stand in the mud, morning and evening, and in spite of dust, rain or chill, we are well. *Laus Deo!*

Horrible Treatment of the Insane.

The exposure of the treatment of the inmates of Insane Asylums which the *Ledger* initiated several months ago, has been developed by the press until it seems to have aroused the whole country. Both private and public Asylums for the Insane are being subjected to candid and searching criticism, and in some cases to official investigation. The results of these inquisitions are painful, but salutary. It seems that sane people are sometimes shut up in Lunatic Asylums for the basest purposes, and that the really insane are sometimes brutally beaten and trampled to death by their inhuman keepers. A keeper in one of the Lunatic Asylums in this State has recently been found guilty by a coroner's jury of causing the death of one lunatic, and contributing to the death of another. It seems that he was in the habit of beating, knocking down, kicking, and stamping upon his helpless victims, in a most shocking manner. How many more such keepers there may be in the public and private Asylums in the United States, the light of rigid investigation can alone reveal. Let us have that light as soon as possible, and in fullest measure.

Violations of the Law of Copy-right.

We are always glad to see substantial justice enforced against those who cunningly attempt by evasion to get around the law of copy-right, as well as against its more bold and open violators. When a publication has become of established value, a close imitation of its title by a rival publisher is as injurious as its downright adoption, while it is more cowardly and contemptible.

In the English Court of Chancery a bill has been filed by the proprietor of a book called the *Birthday Scripture Text Book*, to restrain a firm from publishing a book called the *Children's Birthday Text Book*, and after argument the Master of the Rolls granted an injunction restraining the defendants from publishing the *Children's Birthday Text Book*, or any other book of the title of which the words "*Birthday Text Book*" form a portion, or any book so printed, arranged or contrived as by colorable imitation to lead to the belief that such book is the same as that published by the plaintiff under the title of the *Birthday Scripture Text Book*; and ordered the defendants to pay the costs of the suit.

ELEAZAR WHEELOCK.

BY JAMES PARTON.

The reader remembers, probably, that affecting passage in the Autobiography of Daniel Webster where he describes his emotion upon learning that his father was going to send him to college.

"The very idea," he tells us, "thrilled my whole frame. My father said he then lived but for his children; and if I would do all I could for myself, he would do what he could for me. I remember that I was quite overcome, and my head grew dizzy. The thing appeared to me so high, and the expense and sacrifice it was to cost my father so great, I could only press his hands and shed tears."

The institution to which he was to be sent was Dartmouth College, away in the northern part of New Hampshire, near the Vermont line, and about thirty miles from the home of the Websters at Salisbury. It was the fact of there being a college so near that made it possible for a farmer and county judge to give his sons a college education; for, in those simple old days, a student would carry an important part of his provisions from home, or pay for his board in farm produce. If, therefore, the country owes anything to Daniel Webster and his brother Ezekiel, part of the credit of it is due to Eleazar Wheelock, the grand old Puritan clergyman who planted the institution in the woods when the Webster boys were in their cradles. The story of its origin is one of the most curious and interesting episodes of New England history.

In 1735, Eleazar Wheelock, a young man of twenty-four, recently graduated from Yale College, was ordained a Congregational minister, and settled at Lebanon, Connecticut. He was an exceedingly effective preacher, for he had that prime requisite of an orator, a very harmonious and penetrating voice. He was a handsome man too, of an elegant figure, and he even enjoyed another external advantage: he was possessed of a considerable estate. Add to these qualities learning and zeal, and you have a combination sufficient to give a young minister in a country place brilliant eclat.

As usual with the more learned of the clergy at that day, Eleazar Wheelock received into his family for education a few boys, the sons of the wealthier people of Connecticut. Indeed, at that time, there was scarcely any other way to get a boy prepared for college, but to place him in the family of a clergyman. Dr. Wheelock's little school throve, and its fame extended to other colonies. In the winter of 1743, who should present himself as a pupil but an Indian youth named Samson Occom, aged about nineteen. Until recently this young man had lived with his parents the usual wandering life of the Indians, but having attended the preaching of one of the New London clergymen, he was so deeply impressed, that he became desirous of spending his whole life in teaching his tribe the white man's arts and religion. Hence his application to Eleazar Wheelock.

He was received into the family. He soon learned to read, and his behavior was exemplary. He acquired other knowledge, and, after residing with Dr. Wheelock nearly five years, returned to New London, and opened a school for the education of Indian boys. Soon he removed to Montauk, on Long Island, where the Indians were more numerous, and there he taught and preached with much apparent success for eleven years, living in an Indian wigwam, and gaining his livelihood chiefly by the fish-hook and gun. He developed also some degree of the Yankee dexterity in the use of tools, and gained a little by binding books for the whites, and by making wooden spoons, gunstocks, pails, churns and ax handles. Upon the whole, he was the most successful and satisfactory Indian convert of whom we have any credible account. If occasionally he yielded to the temptation of strong drink, it was a weakness to which few of his race have shown themselves superior.

The good conduct of Occom suggested to Dr. Wheelock the idea of forming a school for the purpose of educating Indian missionaries. He carried out the scheme with such success, that in a few years he had as many as twenty Indian young men under instruction, who were maintained in part by the governments of Connecticut and Massachusetts, and in part by private subscriptions. In order to interest the English people in the institution, Dr. Wheelock sent to England Samson Occom as a specimen of the results of his undertaking. The Indian preacher proved to be an immense sensation. The churches in which he preached were crowded to suffocation. He preached three hundred and sixty times in Great Britain, taking up a collection after each sermon, and raised in this way a considerable sum.

Among the contributors was the Earl of Dartmouth, a popular member of the British Cabinet, Secretary of State for the Colonies. He consented to serve as President of the Board of Trustees in whose hands the Occom funds were placed. Having now a considerable capital at command, and enjoying also the warm and active sympathy of the whole Protestant world, Dr. Wheelock took the bold resolution of removing the institution up into the northern wilderness, so as to be in the midst of Indian tribes, and to establish in connection with his Indian school a complete college, wherein young men, whether white or red, could obtain instruction in the usual college branches.

In 1770, when he was past sixty years of age, rich, honored and beloved, with every inducement to remain at Lebanon at ease for the rest of his life, he resigned the pastorship of his church, which he had held for thirty-five years, and set out with his family and his pupils, seventy souls in all, for Hanover, in New Hampshire, one hundred and seventy miles north of Lebanon. He rode in his own coach, a present from a friend in London, but his pupils and their teachers of both colors went the whole distance on foot. Some slight preparations had been made to receive them on the chosen site of the college. A dense and lofty forest of pines had covered the plain. On an area of about six acres, the giants of the forest had been felled, and lay upon the ground, tangled together, an impenetrable mass of logs and branches. One of the fallen trees measured two hundred and seventy feet as it lay. On a patch of two or three acres the trees had been burned off, and two or three log huts had been constructed.

But the subduing of the wilderness was a familiar task to all the members of that band, and they went to work upon the college with surprising cheerfulness and energy. Paths were cut through the fallen trees. A little town of log huts quickly rose. A frame house for the Doctor was begun. A college building, eighty feet long and two stories high, was soon under way. After making considerable progress, it was found that wells dug upon the spot would yield no water, and the settlement had to be removed to some distance, and all begun afresh. And yet, during the whole of that long and dreary winter—the snow four feet deep for more than four months—the young men pursued their studies in their log homes with enthusiasm, and the next summer a class of four graduated, one of whom was John Wheelock, son of the President, and destined to succeed his father at the head of the college.

Such was the romantic beginning of Dartmouth College, the institution which placed knowledge within the reach of Daniel Webster. The Revolutionary War made it difficult to keep alive the infant institution; but, owing in great part to the energy and talent, the tact and engaging power of Eleazar Wheelock, the College was maintained. The Indian school, however, was less successful. Discovering that about one-half of the Indian youth educated under his care relapsed into savage life, the President gradually changed his plan, and devoted his chief care to the education of white missionaries. Dr. Wheelock died in 1779, aged sixty-eight, leaving the College possessed of fifty thousand acres of land, and a sufficiency of whatever was most requisite for the education of the hardy students of that time.

His son John, who succeeded him in the presidency of the College, visited Europe as soon as the war was over, and procured a considerable addition to its endowment, as well as a number of books and philosophical instruments, returning to his native land to be wrecked upon Cape Cod, and escaping with life alone, to spend that life in the service of the College.

HOW WE PAID FOR OUR FUN.

BY JUDGE CLARK.

Vacation was over, and most of the old students, with a fair sprinkling of new ones, were already on hand.

A lot of us who had got in too late for supper, were refreshing our inward man—or boy—at Chopps', our regular place for irregular meals.

"Who's seen Rufe Riggs?" asked one.

"Has he got back yet?" queried another.

"Hullo!—talk of, etc.—here he comes—another returned prodigal."

"Yes," said a mock-melancholy-looking youth, whose entrance was greeted as above—"another returned prodigal, and likely," he added, with a glance at the half-emptied dishes, "to be about as bounteously received as his scriptural prototype would have been, had he got back to find the old man dead, and the stingy son in possession."

"Come, come, Rufe, cheer up!" said a merry-faced Sophomore; "if we haven't a fatted calf to offer you, here's at least a veal cutlet at your service."

"A part for the whole," said Rufe, drawing up a chair, and diving a fork into the proffered viand—"a part for the whole, by figure of speech called metonymy, of which, begging its pardon, I never saw the sense before."

We considerately waited till he had blunted the edge of his appetite.

"What fun have you had?" at length inquired a callow-looking Freshman.

"Oh, none; that is, none to speak of," answered Rufe. "There *was* a little circumstance," chuckling, "but *that* was more in the way of business."

"Tell it!—tell it!" chimed in all.

"Well, you see, I and Lafe Means, out on a rural lark, were suddenly brought to, money-bound, in a strange village. Following my instructions, Lafe was taken dangerously sick. The landlord expressed his regret that the only doctor in the place was absent, a fact we previously knew. Lafe said it made no difference; *I* was his family physician, and he would trust his case to no other. I was called in at once, and pronounced his malady *small-pox*, a decision not a little confirmed by Lafe's pimply face. You may guess there was a commotion. In less than forty-eight hours I had vaccinated the whole population, with *blank matter*, at a dollar a head. I divided with Lafe, whom I pronounced out of danger, and leaving him something to keep the disease from 'striking in,' and cautioning him against exciting suspicion by a too speedy convalescence, I had a sudden call elsewhere. As bad luck would have it, the local doctor returned, nosed out the hoax, and Lafe got a veneering of tar and feathers which will stick to him for a month."

Rufe didn't seem to perceive the dishonesty and fraud involved in his practical joke. In fact, he had no moral sense, and brought up in the Penitentiary about eight years after he graduated.

"But I've a thing on hand *now*," said Rufe, when we had finished his cutlet, "with heaps of fun in it, if you chaps will only help me."

We vowed we would.

"A raw student came up on the coach with me," he explained—"the greatest '*greeny*' ever caught in a gull-trap. We rode outside, where I had him all to myself. I told him all about the secret societies here—that they rule everything, and that, to *be* anybody, one must belong to one—that I was a member myself of the best of them, and thought I could get him in; at all events I would try, as I had taken a great fancy to him. The upshot is, he is burning to be initiated, and we must put him through to-morrow night."

"Agreed!—agreed!" was the unanimous voice.

It should be explained that secret societies were then the rage in that and other colleges. A fancy breastpin, with two or three Greek letters—no matter which—on it, and a knowing look on the part of the wearer, was about all there was to any of them. Nevertheless, to be admitted to one of these fraternities was esteemed a high honor, to which new students especially aspired; and it was a favorite trick to catch a greenhorn, and initiate him into a *sham* one, with all manner of mock ceremonies.

Such was the process to which Rufe Riggs proposed to subject his new acquaintance, and in which we had promised to assist.

And a fitter subject for a hoax than Hiram Hodge, when we came to see him, we all agreed, had never left the abodes of rural innocence. His capacity for belief was simply miraculous. When we told him of the antiquity of our order—that tradition carried it back to the Ark; that Alexander, Julius Cæsar, Washington and Napoleon Bonaparte had all been members; that our predecessors had built the pyramids, and we still had the secret of the "lost arts"—the fellow took it in without blinking. The offer of membership in such a body fairly dazzled him, and he jumped at it.

And such an initiation as we gave him when night came! The preposterous vows we made him take, the ridiculous attitudes he was compelled to assume, and the queer capers he was made to cut, capped the climax of absurdity. If he hadn't been a spry chap, he could never have gone through it all. As it was, it was rather more trying to *us*, than to *him*. He could keep his gravity without effort; it nearly killed us to preserve ours.

When completely tired out at last, we brought the ceremonies to a close, and Mr. Hodge was declared admitted to full membership.

But Rufe Riggs never *could* let well enough alone.

Rising and addressing the chair, he called attention to the recent efforts of the college president to suppress our society, and to a rumor that he had, by foul means, gained possession of some of our most valued secrets, which he was only waiting a favorable opportunity to publish to the world. There was but one thing to be done. This dangerous enemy must be put out of the way, and that at once. He proposed that a committee be appointed to assassinate him, and suggested blowing him up in his study with gunpowder.

This was *too* absurd, and coming unexpectedly, threw more than one of us off our balance. Several half-suppressed titters were heard. Recovering ourselves as best we could, Rufe's proposal was warmly debated—its author bringing up all the instances of high-toned assassination recorded in history, and contending that the present was a more justifiable case than any of them. It would be an eternal disgrace, he said, to allow one paltry life to outweigh the existence of an institution it had taken more than three thousand years to perfect.

The question was put, and the motion carried.

Poor Hodge was the picture of dismay. He fairly quaked with terror; and when the chair appointed him one of the committee to carry the murderous resolution into effect, he was too frightened to object. He believed himself in a den of assassins, to whose nefarious plans it would be worth his life to offer the slightest resistance.

On reaching the street, after the meeting adjourned, Hodge dodged round the first corner and ran for life; and we, after a good laugh, betook ourselves to our respective lodgings.

After a disturbed night's rest, for I woke up several times and found myself laughing, I had just settled down to a comfortable morning nap, when a peremptory knock at the door waked me.

"Who's there?" I demanded.

"Open the door!" growled a gruff voice.

In no gentle mood I complied, determined to meet the intruder with a proper rebuff.

"What do you want?" I asked sharply, of a thick-set specimen of muscular vulgarity who stood confronting me.

"*You!*" was the curt response.

"Go about your business!" I thundered, starting to slam the door in his face.

"Look 'e here, youngster!" he said, pushing me aside, and making his way into the room. "I'm a nofficer with a warrant; and you'd better make haste and git on your toggery—that is, onless you perfer goin' afore the Squire jest as you are."

"A warrant!—let me see it," I exclaimed, extending my hand for a crumpled scrap of paper he held.

"No you don't!" said the burly embodiment of the law's majesty, closing the door and clapping his back to it: "I've got to return this yer dockyment along with your carcage, dead or alive, and nither on 'em goes out o' my persession till then. Howsever, I can tell you wot's in it. You're took for a con*spir*eacy to murder."

I burst into a laugh.

"I'm glad to see you take it that a way," said the "nofficer"—"I hate them sniv'lin' chaps; they try a man's temper so."

I hurried on my clothes in a state of mind alternating between a sense of the awkwardness of the situation and its ridiculousness.

At the magistrate's I found my companions of the night before prisoners like myself—all except Hodge. He and "Old Doc.," as we used to call our venerable president, were our accusers.

Hodge—and he deserved great credit for it, for he believed himself acting under deadly peril—had no sooner escaped from our presence, than inquiring his way to the president's, he ran thither, and routing up that dignitary, told him of our diabolical plot. Old Doc., who in all worldly matters was as green as Hodge, took the thing seriously. As soon as it was day—they didn't dare go out before—the two hastened over to the Squire's, where Hodge made the affidavit on which we were arrested.

In vain we protested that the whole affair was a joke. Old Doc. had been an irreconcilable enemy of secret societies in college, and believed them capable of anything for revenge.

The Squire, I thought from the twinkle of his eye, saw through the case; but he didn't feel at liberty to discharge us, in the face of a complaint so serious, merely on our own word.

When the papers got into the hands of the State's Attorney, who had been a boy once himself, he dismissed the proceedings, *but we had lain a week in jail first.*

END OF THE SUMMER SEASON.

There is nothing more absurd than the hot haste with which people hurry from a watering-place at the first crisp breath of Autumn, when "the season" is closed. The definition of "the season" has been for many years changed; the season closing now, not when ladies can no longer wear gauze dresses in riding, but very near the time when Jack Frost's hieroglyphics may be read upon the window-pane. The upstart rich do not seem to know this, any more than they can understand that most of our fashionable people of solid foundation have built unto themselves beautiful villas in the neighborhood of the great hotels, so perfect as to gastronomic and equestrian arrangements, to say nothing of extensive bath-rooms of their own, as to monopolize all the party giving under the privacy of their own roofs. This the new people do not know, and cannot therefore account for the absence of an audience on the occasion of the unloading of their numerous trunks, for the crowded promenade corridor of half-dress, instead of the crowded ball-room in full dress.

"It don't pay," says mamma, looking at her daughter's new diamonds, purchased with the gougings of many years in avenue groceries.

"It's all humbug," says papa, mopping his face with his handkerchief, as he thinks of his slippers and easy chair at home.

"Where are the men?" asks Angeline, giving her curls an extra twirl. "I shall be an old maid before I am brought out. Matilda will never be married off at this rate."

This is the exposition of the whole matter. This is why the hotels are closed at the end of the "fashionable season." This is why our solid families remain in their pretty villas, enjoying their horseback rides at noon and their evening drives, and their social parties, and the genuine hospitality which is born not of eating and drinking, but of good feeling and good taste.

There are people of refined nature but limited means, who would prefer to remain till winter sets in, and enjoy the lovely autumn days, were it not for unhealthy stoves and the absence of gas, so necessary at this season, to which their eyes have become accustomed in the long, bright city evenings. But, as it is acknowledged for years past by all physicians, that city life has too much friction, perhaps this going to bed at hen-roost is the best preparation for the coming winter.

As for me, whether I go early or late, whether my eyes are shut or open, memory will always make pictures for me of dear, blessed Newport, full of sparkle and sunrise, eastern gems and sunset splendors, dog-carts and donkeys, phaetons and four-in-hand, long-haired literary people and close-cropped dandies, all moving in that crisp air, which makes us say with Festus, "Oh, God, I thank thee that I live!" FANNY FERN.

A Fight between Magistrates in Court.

The English have been noted for the solemnity and decorum of their courts, and for the horror they have experienced at the recital of the "wild scenes" enacted in the court rooms of the New World. But a fight recently came off in the court room at Norwich, in England, between two magistrates, which puts to shame anything of the kind recorded in the judicial annals of America. One of the belligerent magistrates was named BLAKE: the other was called Captain BRIGNOLA. There were several other magistrates on the bench, besides the Mayor of Norwich, who presided over the court. There being a difference of opinion on a legal point, Captain BRIGNOLA called his colleague, Mr. BLAKE, "a foolish old man." Squire BLAKE's blood was fired by this insult, and striking a pugilistic attitude, he defiantly called upon the Captain to "come on." The Captain didn't come on, and so Squire BLAKE "went" for *him*. The Mayor called upon Squire BLAKE to sit down, but instead of sitting down himself he knocked down his fellow-magistrate. The Mayor then caught the enraged British lion by the tail of his coat, shouted, "Don't, BLAKE, don't!" and tried to pull him from his victim; but he wouldn't be pulled, and so the victim pulled from him, and got away, considerably damaged. It is said that "the members of the bench present witnessed the scene with evident consternation, surprise and regret," but that "the spectators greatly enjoyed the spectacle," all which we can readily believe.

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—The Rev. William C. Kerr, of Williamsport, Pa., was instrumental recently in having three of the leading members of his church, who had charged him with immoral conduct, indicted for libel. The jury, notwithstanding the clergyman swore positively to his own innocence, returned a verdict of not guilty in favor of his accusers.

THE INVISIBLE SONGSTER.

BY NATHAN D. URNER.

The Morning blooms on the frosty heights,
Gath'ring the mists in his golden hands,
And slowly to view in the rosy lights,
The shadowy scene, like a dream, expands.

No sound to gladden the drear, bright air,
Which, but for the silence, were soft and warm,
Save a far-away note from chanticleer,
Or house-dog's bark from the distant farm.

When suddenly, trilled from a thicket dense,
A song pours out from an unseen bird,
That soothes the ear and charms the sense
With a cadence sweet as e'er mortal heard.

Scarce a leaf has flushed the woods with green,
And the fields are still dark in their sober hues,
Yet with color and beauty and joy the scene
That wonderful, beautiful voice imbues.

I know not the name of the feathered king,
Not a glimpse can I get of his lifted crest,
But his song is the soul of the breathing Spring,
And it finds a response in my weary breast.

Louder and clearer; the whole wide air
With its infinite, rapturous joy it fills,
Till soft grow the branches brown and bare,
And a green shade seems to cover the hills.

The little brook from his ice chains breaks,
And laughs in his sleeve as he leaps along,
And the frosty world to beauty awakes,
In the spell of the unseen herald's song.

Sing out, O darling of field and wood!
Our hearts, that were dreary, with thee must sing.
Thou hast caught the key of our hopes renewed,
And thy song is the soul of the breathing Spring.

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THE BLACK DOCTOR;

OR, THE

Prophecy of the Voodoo King.

AN HISTORICAL TALE OF THE SPANISH RULE IN LOUISIANA.

By WILLIAM HENRY PECK,
Professor of History in the University of the State of Louisiana.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE FATE OF LEON DE VARGAS.

At length Adraste Scipian was satisfied for the time with his work, and stood aside to regard those features whose beauty had for twelve years been hidden by a stain nearly black.

Sixteen years had passed since the eyes of Ivan and Adraste Scipian had rested upon the beauty of this noble face. It was as fair as snow, though as pale as the whitest marble, and with a hectic flush on the cheeks—a flush caused by that drug which the pretended Voodoo doctor had administered to the unfortunate woman when she swooned before the hut.

It was a gloriously beautiful face, perfect in every feature, and appeared to be that of a woman of about twenty-five, though in fact she was nearly ten years older.

"Beautiful! gloriously beautiful yet!" exclaimed Adraste Scipian, as he gazed upon the face. "Much more mature, Ivan, than when we saw her last, but how wondrously has she retained the beauty of her maidenhood!"

"She is indeed most beautiful, my lord," replied Ivan, in a cold, grave tone. "Take care that your old passion of mad love for this lady does not rise to stand between your ambition and obedience to the command of the Empress. Unless your Highness returns to St. Petersburg with such palpably true proofs of the death of this lady as shall fully satisfy the Empress, you are never to return to Russia again. Nor I, my lord."

"Love for her shall not make me resign my wealth and ambition. Yet she shall be mine ere I prove to the Empress that the daughter of Ivan is dead."

"'Tis indeed my Angelique!" mentally exclaimed Perez, as he stared at the splendid face. "A million maledictions on these Russians! What crime do they meditate? Diablos! Sancho Perez is not in the mines of Almeida."

"This is your 'Isadora Raymundo,'" said Adraste Scipian to Perez, and pointing at the insensible lady. "At sea she shall be given to you to punish for the loss of your nose, Sancho Perez."

"I ask no more, Senor," growled the convict, in sullen reply. "I would kill her now if you would let me—with these," said he ferociously, extending his bony fingers like the talons of a tiger.

"Well, Juan," said Ivan, turning to the old negro, whose eyes were fixed in wonder and awe upon the beautiful and motionless face. "What have you to say of this face?"

"'Fore Gad, Massa Ivan, dat de same lubly young woman ole Juan done see rise outen dis ches' years ago!—dat time I done tole you hidalgos all about! Dat she! It am! De same de two men tooken outen dis ches'—which am bound to be de coffin ob de man, woman, or—"

"Silence! you black dog of Satan!" said Perez, grasping the arm of the old man.

"Yah! yah! Juan keep he mouf shet, Massa Cappen," replied Juan, and then to himself thus:

"It am true for sure dat I swored on dis Voodoo ches' to be de dog ob Cappen Perez, but when dat handsome young woman sabed de life ob ole Juan from de knives ob de two men what tooken her outen dis ches', ole Juan swored in he soul ob souls eber to be ready to gib him own life in de sarbice ob dat young woman!—an' 'fore God dis ole colored hidalgo gwine to be true to dat soul oaf, ef he die for it!"

But the old negro was very careful to keep these thoughts to himself.

"Yes, Juan," said Adraste Scipian, "this is the same woman whom you saw taken from the chest. Now do you and Joseph go out and prepare something for us to eat. Cook it out there, for I wish this hut to be perfectly quiet while this woman sleeps. By night she may be able to tell us why she hid in that chest."

Juan and Perez, perceiving that Adraste Scipian was preparing some medical potion, left the hut to build a fire near it, and to prepare a meal for all.

It was very easy for Juan and Perez to converse privately as they did this.

"Juan," said Perez, "you have not forgotten your oath on the Voodoo chest—your oath to be true to me?"

"Axed me dat a good many times ob late, Cappen. What you want?"

"We must save the life of my Angelique."

"Your Angelique? who dat, Cappen?"

"That beautiful and unfortunate lady in the hut."

"She your Angelique?"

"Yes. Diablos! She must be rescued from these murderous Russians, Juan."

"Jes heered Don Sebastian tell you he gwine to gib dat lady in dar to you, Massa Cappen, when we all at sea in dat vessel Massa Ivan tole us about dis morning."

"Juan, I am not deceived. They mean to throw me, and you too, to the sharks when they have done with us; and they will be done with us as soon as they have the lady aboard that vessel. They will not leave us alive to tell what they have done."

"Juan 'fraid dat is true, Cappen. But what you gwine to do wid de lady, ef we rescue her?"

"Time was when she would have been treated as badly by me as they mean to treat her, Juan. That time is passed. I wish to kill these Russians. Then I will aid the lady to do anything she may desire, Juan. I will be her slave for life, if she will let me."

"Glad to hear you say dat, Cappen. But how gwine to do dat? Dem two men no fools, no chickens. Strong men, bofe—and active as cats."

"Poison them, Juan."

"De good Lor'!"

"I have a vial of Don Sebastian's poison in my pocket. It is the mate to that he gave to me to give Leon de Vargas. The very same poison that made Madame Varlville ill—the same that killed the old negro Media. I secured it this morning."

"How gwine to do de poisoning, Cappen?"

"Put it into something we are cooking—into this ragout, of which they are so fond."

"May be dey gib some ob de ragout to de lady, Cappen."

"We must take care that they do not. But the lady will not be able to eat for hours yet. Don Sebastian has just given her something to make her sleep a long time; and intending that she shall be conscious when she wakes. Never fear. I will take all the blame and their rage, if they detect the poison before it masters them. I could have managed the affair very easily without telling you of my purpose, Juan. And have poisoned you too, as for that matter."

"That very true," thought old Juan; "but 'pears to dis ole colored hidalgo dat ef de Cappen war not in need ob my sarbices he would as soon pisen Juan Olio as anybody."

"So you could, Cappen," he said, in reply to Perez. "An' ole Juan bery grateful to you for not pisening he. And, Massa Cappen, Juan wid you in tryin' to sabe de handsome lady. Reckin dat pisen bery safe not to be suspected, or Don Sebastian wouldn't 'a use him."

"That is very true, Juan; and so we shall be perfectly safe in using it," replied Perez.

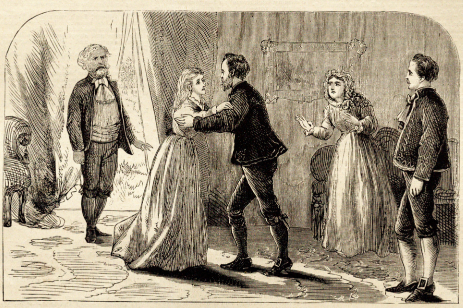
"You use de pisen, Cappen. Ole Juan got no hand in de biznis. Juan shet he eye and see noting. Shet him mouf an' say noting. None ob he biznis. Dat 's so," returned the old negro.

Leaving the hut and its vicinity for the present, we will return for a time to the Varlville mansion.

It was nearly night when Adrian Dudley and Madame Varlville arrived at the mansion from the swamp, as their ride homeward was very slow. Madame Varlville's strength had been greatly taxed by the expedition.

Having reposed for an hour or two after her return, she was aroused by Adrian, who seemed excited more than usual.

"What is the matter, my son?" asked she, as she reclined in bed.



GENERAL VARLVILLE EMBRACING HIS LONG-LOST WIFE THEODORA.

"Monsieur Ralté, your lawyer, has just called, and the first question he asked was, 'Is Madame Varlville able to give me and these gentlemen an interview to-night?'"

"What gentlemen, my son?"

"I do not know them. I never saw them before. But before I could reply to Monsieur Ralté, one of the strangers said to me, with evident eagerness, and even agitation, 'Is the negress Mercita in this house?'"

"*Mon Dieu!*" exclaimed Madame Varlville. "The honor of the Varlville name is in danger. What did you reply?"

"I replied that I would see you immediately, and I left the three gentlemen in the parlor."

"But of Mercita?"

"I merely bowed to him who asked after her, and both he and the other stranger mistaking my bow for an affirmative reply, grasped each other's hands, and uttered that Russian ejaculation which I have sometimes heard you use, '*Slava Bogn.*'"

"Which means, 'Glory to God!' my son. This is very strange. Conduct the gentlemen to the White Room; I will speak with them there presently. Fortunately I feel very strong after my sleep. Say nothing to them of Mercita. Send Ninette the hall maid to conduct them to the White Room. She believes Mercita is here in my bedroom. Then return to me."

Monsieur Ralté had not accompanied the strangers to the Varlville Mansion. He did not know them. He had never seen them before. He was in the act of striking the brazen knocker of the front door when these two, who had entered the street gate a moment after he had passed through it, joined him hastily at the door.

They were breathing hard, as men do after running very fast.

The servant ushered the three into the parlor, and then, at the request of Monsieur Ralte, sought Adrian Dudley.

Adrian hastened to meet Monsieur Ralte; but before he could speak to the lawyer, the two strangers simultaneously asked him that question we have just heard him report to Madame Varlville:

"Is the negress Mercita in the house?"

After Adrian had bowed to the Russians in response to their question, the lawyer took him aside, and said:

"I have bad, very sad tidings for you. Perhaps it will be well not to inform Madame Varlville to-night of what I have learned."

Monsieur Ralte then cautiously informed Adrian that the body of his cousin, Leon de Vargas, had been discovered floating in the lake below New Orleans, and that it had evidently been in the water several days.

"Poor Leon!" ejaculated Adrian.

"Yes. Unfortunate young man! He may have been drowned by accident, or some assassin may have killed him, and thrown his body into the lake. The fisherman who found it was obliged to bury the body, with the help of his comrades, as it was much decayed. But there were cuts in the bosom of the vest, as if from stabs with a large knife. Shall we inform Madame Varlville to-night?"

"I think not."

"At least it will be well to prepare her mind to receive bad tidings, Adrian. She must learn of Leon's death some time. So, if she will see me, I will prepare the way after she shall have seen and dismissed these strangers."

To this Adrian agreed, and he then went to Madame Varlville's bedroom and aroused her, as we have told.

His unusual agitation, therefore, was not from anything connected with the coming of the strangers, but because of the tidings brought by Monsieur Ralte.

Leon de Vargas had perished by the knife of Sancho Perez: we may as well state the fact here, and briefly. After the two left the hut, as narrated in a previous chapter, Perez resolved to secure the absence of Leon by murdering him. The convict feared lest the young would-be assassin might return to the Varlville Mansion, and in his guilty cowardice reveal all to some one, either as a relief to his conscience or by chance.

The truculent ruffian accompanied the doomed youth to the Lake shore, and there stabbed him in the breast thrice, each stab a mortal wound; and taking the body into that sail-boat in which Leon had designed to go to Mobile, carried it far out into the lake, and there, miles from shore, tossed it overboard.

The body sank, as Perez had tied a heavy piece of iron—part of the ballast of the sail-boat—to the corpse. But after a few days the corpse rose to the surface, and was slowly drifted to the shore, where the lake fishermen afterward found it.

Leon had exclaimed, as he fell:

"Ah! assassin! why do you stab me?"

Perez had replied, as he dealt him two more terrible thrusts:

"Because I am Sancho Perez, a white man, and not Pedro Vargas, a mulatto! And because you, Leon de Vargas, are a coward whose life threatens mine."

Another than the dying Leon de Vargas heard these words—a man who chanced to be lying concealed near where the crime was done; a powerful and ferocious mulatto, who had recently escaped from slavery in Cuba, and returned to where he had lived in his youth.

This man, however, did not see fit to show himself to Perez, but saw and heard all, and then stole into the woods like a beast of prey.

This witness of the death of Leon de Vargas was a man whom Sancho Perez had kidnapped from freedom and sold into slavery, twenty years and more before.

The name of this mulatto was Pedro Vargas, and he was the half-brother of the father of Leon de Vargas—the very man whom Perez had made Leon believe Sancho Perez was.

And now to narrate the interview of Madame Varlville with the two strangers, who had been assured, as they supposed, by the hall servant and by Adrian Dudley, that Mercita was in the Varlville mansion.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE BUSINESS OF THE STRANGERS.

Madame Varlville, leaning on the arm of Adrian, entered the White Room, where her visitors were awaiting her.

Monsieur Ralte bowed as the stately old lady seated herself in that great chair or fauteul of white velvet before which Adraste Scipian had tinkled his Voodoo bells.

"Madame, as these gentlemen appear to have business with you more important than mine, I will retire until you are disengaged."

"No, no, my friend—remain. But these gentlemen are strangers to me, and my son has just told me that they are the same to you," replied Madame Varlville.

"Yes, Madame," said the elder of the two, a man fully sixty-five years old, but evidently vigorous and active, "we are strangers, but perhaps we have good news for you."

"Good news is ever to be welcomed, even from strangers; but I understand that you are here to speak of my housekeeper, Mercita," said the resolute old lady, thus boldly approaching the subject. "You cannot see her to-night, as she is engaged—"

"Yes, Madame. But let me first speak of another person," remarked the gentleman who had just spoken. "Has Madame never thought that a person may be alive, even when his own mother and father, and all who knew him in his childhood, have for years and years believed that he was dead?"

"Sir!"

"Calm yourself, Madame. We have great and joyous tidings for you," said the white-haired stranger.

"And I," thought Monsieur Ralte, "have black and terrible tidings for her. I must not tell them to her to-night."

Madame Varlville pressed her hands upon her bosom, and said, in a deep whisper:

"*Grand Ciel!* Does this man come to tell me of my lost Henri?"

"Yes, Madame. To tell you that your infant boy was not sacrificed to the Voodoo idols of Africa, as doubtless you have long believed."

"He lives?"

"He lives, Madame, and has sent us to tell you that he will be here to embrace you to-morrow."

"To-morrow! *Grand Ciel!* My boy alive, and will be here to-morrow to embrace me!" gasped Madame Varlville. "Give me wine, Adrian. I feel as if about to swoon."

"Gentlemen," said the lawyer, "Madame has but just recovered from a nearly fatal illness. Take care."

"I am strong again, my friend," exclaimed Madame Varlville. "Were I dying, this news, if true, would give me new lease of life. Yes, gentlemen, I have sometimes had a faint hope—oh, rather a fierce longing to hope—that my son was not murdered by the black savages."

"Madame," said the elder stranger, "we are aware of the story told to Dr. Adrian Varlville by the Voodoo king, Obi. But Obi lied. The boy was not slain."

"Ah, thank God!"

"Obi meant to rear the child to be a white Voodoo priest, but sold him to a Russian traveller a year after you lost him. This Russian, Volskoff by name, though fully informed by Obi of the name and parentage of the child, gave to him his own name and carried him to Russia. There he reared and educated the boy as his son, for Volskoff was childless. The name of the boy in Russia was Basil Volskoff. He rose to be a general in the armies of Russia. But he married a lady who was, soon after the marriage, discovered to be the daughter of the murdered Ivan Antonovitch, the rightful heir of the Russian crown. On learning this fact, the Empress Catherine II. endeavored to effect the destruction of this lawful heiress of the throne she had usurped. General Volskoff was seized, and would have been beheaded had he not escaped and hidden himself among the Circassians, who were then, as now, at war with Russia. Among them he changed his name, and having no doubt that Catherine had beheaded, or in some way destroyed his bride, he waged an unsparing war with the Russian armies of the tyrant Empress. For nearly sixteen years he served as a famous chief among those warlike Circassians who refused fealty to Russia. The Princess Theodora, his wife, aided by her foster-father, Count Romansoff, escaped the plots of the Empress, however, though for many years she has been supposed to be dead—"

"But of my son?" cried Madame Varlville eagerly.

"Madame, some months ago the traveller Volskoff was captured by the Circassians; and as one of their chiefs he recognized his adopted son—your son, Madame. The old traveller being at the point of death, revealed to Henri Varlville all the facts connected with his rescue from the savages of Africa, wrote them out in full, and told where you were to be found; for Volskoff, from curiosity to see the parents of his adopted son, twice visited this city. Madame may remember an old Russian gentleman—"

"Who was here fifteen years ago—and four years ago! I remember him well. He was in this city several weeks at each visit. He called himself Makoff."

"Yes, Madame. Makoff was Alexis Volskoff, as you will see when you read his confession to Henri Varlville. And your son has with him the very clothes he wore when you saw him last; for Obi had saved them, and sold them with the boy to Volskoff. He has also the ring which Obi told Volskoff you took from your finger and placed on the child's thumb, when you parted with him."

"*Grand Dieu*, I thank thee!" ejaculated Madame Varlville, lifting her tearful eyes toward heaven, and clasping her hands in an ecstasy of joy.

Here the younger stranger, who, as we have said, was a man in the vigorous prime of life, arose and knelt at the feet of Madame Varlville, saying, in tones which trembled with emotion:

"Mother, I am Henri Varlville! I am indeed your son! Here is the confession of Alexis Volskoff; here the clothes I wore when you saw me last; here is the ring you gave me when we parted!"

"And I thought they had slain thee with that hateful club. Oh that thy father had lived to see thee now, my Henri!" exclaimed Madame Varlville, after she had gazed at the well preserved boyish garb, at the well remembered ring, and keenly into the noble face that looked up to her own. "My son! my only son! my lost boy is mine again—is mine again!" she sobbed, as she embraced him who was no more to be a stranger to her. "Thou hast thy father's face and form, my son. God bless thee!"

Thus mutually embracing for a long minute, and then Gen. Varlville, as we may now call this suddenly restored son, said:

"And now, mother, permit me to see my wife."

"Your wife!" exclaimed the amazed lady, staring at the speaker, whose eyes were sparkling with anticipated joy. "Your wife, my son?"

"The Princess Theodora, mother. The daughter of Sediassa Countess of Arlenfeld, who was wedded to the unfortunate Czar Ivan Antonovitch in his prison."

"My son, are you sane? What should I know of the daughter of Ivan Antonovitch? True, I have read that Catherine II. had that unhappy prince murdered in his prison, in 1763; but of his marriage, and of Countess Sediassa, and of your wife— *Grand Ciel!* why do you say to me, 'Let me see my wife?' I know nothing about her."

"Have you not a woman of your household, a supposed negress, named Mercita, mother?" asked Gen. Varlville, smiling.

"I—I—I have!" gasped Madame Varlville.

"Mercita is a white woman in the disguise of a slave negress, mother."

"I—I—have long suspected that—"

"And she whom you call Mercita, mother, is the Princess Theodora—my wife!"

Madame Varlville, on hearing her son speak thus, uttered a shriek of wonder and horror, and sinking back in her chair, groaned:

"*Grand Dieu!* She is the poisoner! Tell him all, Adrian! tell him all! The honor of the Varlville name is lost—lost—lost forever!"

And Madame Varlville closed her eyes as if in a swoon of death.

"The poisoner!" repeated General Varlville, amazed, terrified, and glaring wildly. "Young man, what does she mean? Where is Mercita? Lead me to her! What mystery is this? Where is the Princess Theodora! The tyrant Catherine of Russia is dead, and I may claim my wife by her true name and title. Where is Mercita? She is my wife— Ah, by Heaven, she is here! Theodora! wife! love! darling!" And here Gen. Varlville clasped his arms around a form that had suddenly bounded into the room from the bedchamber of Madame Varlville, and leaped, with a wild cry of ineffable joy, into his outstretched arms.

It was she whom we have thus far known as the negress Mercita, but whom henceforth we must call Theodora Varlville.

"I am in thy arms, my husband! my Basil! *Slava Bogn!*" sobbed the wife upon the enraptured husband's bosom.

And "*Slava Bogn!*" said the white-bearded elder stranger, who was no other than he whom we have sometimes called Paul Smolenski.

A black and bald head peering in from the open door which communicated with the bedroom of Madame Varlville, grinning from ear to ear, exclaimed:

"Dis berry strange, take him any way! But reckin de great white folks got to t'ank de ole colored hidalgo Juan Olio for dis joyful exuberation! Dat 's so!"

"And our child—the child I have never seen—my daughter of whom I have heard so much from your foster-father—dear wife?" asked Gen. Varlville.

"Was well and happy in Natchez three weeks ago," replied Theodora. "Ask Adrian Dudley, for he saw her last."

"I!" exclaimed Adrian, amazed—"I!"

"Yes, Adrian, for your Angelique is my daughter, and the daughter of this noble gentleman—my husband, General Basil Volskoff," replied Theodora. "Ah! for many, many a year I have feared you were dead, my Basil!"

"Henri Varlville now, my Theodora," replied the husband. "But my mother—I must look to her."

In truth Madame Varlville was stupefied for the moment from amazement, and seemed ready to swoon from exhaustion.

But while those in the White Room are enchanging explanations and congratulations, we will endeavor to set before the reader as briefly as possible the causes for these effects, as follows:

Peter I., usually called Peter the Great, Emperor or Czar of Russia, died in 1725. He was succeeded on the throne by his Czarina, Catherine I. She died in 1727. She was succeeded by Peter II., the grandson of Peter the Great—for Peter the Great put to death his own son, the Czarovitch Alexis, who was the father of Peter II.

Peter II. died in 1730, of small-pox, on the eve of his marriage. The Russian nobles, for political reasons, then gave the throne to Anne, Duchess of Courland, second daughter of Ivan—who was the elder brother of Peter the Great. Anne died in 1740, and by her will left the crown of Russia to the infant Prince Ivan Antonovitch, the son of the Princess Mecklenburg, and grandnephew of Alexis, the father of Peter the Great and the Czar Ivan.

Thus by will of the late Empress, and by direct imperial descent, Ivan Antonovitch was rightful Emperor of Russia.

But Elizabeth, daughter of Peter the Great and Catherine I., had a powerful party, and aided by that party, she seized the throne and placed the young Czar Ivan in prison, in 1740. Elizabeth died in 1762, the victim of disease brought on by intemperance. She left the crown of Russia to Peter III., great-grandson to Peter the Great. Peter III. was poisoned and strangled to death by his wife, three months after he became Czar; and the murderess became Empress or Czarina of Russia under the title of Catherine II.

Catherine II. was exceedingly fearful lest the rightful Czar, Ivan Antonovitch, should escape from the Castle of Schusselberg, in which he was confined; and by her command he was there assassinated, July 17th, 1762—three months after she had murdered her husband, Peter III.

Catherine II. then reigned securely until 1780, when she discovered that Ivan Antonovitch had left a legitimate daughter, the Princess Theodora—the Mercita of our story—sole offspring of his secret marriage in his prison with Lady Sediassa, a relative of his own imperial line; and that one of her generals, Basil Volskoff, had recently married this daughter of the murdered Czar, Ivan.

She was told this by a Russian lord, Count Apraxin—our Don Sebastian, or Adraste Scipian—who had aspired to the hand of the Princess Theodora, and been rejected by her. The Empress commanded Count Apraxin to destroy the Princess, and to imprison Basil Volskoff. The reader is aware that the latter was the lost son of Madame Varlville.

Count Apraxin, eager for revenge, hastened to obey the orders of the bloodthirsty Empress. But Theodora, aided by her foster-father, Count Nicholas Romansoff—the Paul Smolenski of our story—escaped the hate of Apraxin, and was for nearly four years pursued by him and other agents of the Empress through different countries of Europe.

In this pursuit Count Apraxin was aided by his brother, Count Ivanfosk—the Ivan or Père Dominique of our story; and during their pursuit they learned that a child had been born to the fugitive princess a few months after the beginning of her flight. But they failed to discover whether the infant was a boy or a girl.

They traced Theodora and Count Nicholas to Madrid in 1783, and by means of the numbers of certain bank-notes traced them to the West Indies in 1784. Among these notes was No. 13,721, used in our story. All the imperial correspondence carried on during the pursuit spoke of the fugitive princess under the name of "The Living Cross of Saint Andrew," or "The Cross," as that style of cross was a favorite with the murdered Czar Ivan while he lived, and was upon the gold case of a miniature stolen by Count Apraxin when he was a suitor for the hand of Theodora.

The miniature case, and that ring found by Count Apraxin in the Voodoo chest, had been given by the imprisoned Czar Ivan to his wife, Czarina Sediassa; but the portrait it contained in our story was that of Theodora, at the age of sixteen years.

The fugitives were for a time concealed in San Domingo, and it was there that Count Romansoff—Smolenski—conceived the extraordinary plot which was afterward so successful, to wit: that Theodora should assume the disguise of a negress, be sold as such, and remain as such while he secured an asylum for her little daughter—the latter at that time in England, but supposed to be in danger of discovery.

Prior to their voyage on the *Doubloon*, Count Romansoff visited New Orleans, and learning that Madame Varlville needed a servant of very rare accomplishments, and discovering the noble character of that stately and uninquisitive lady, resolved to secrete Theodora in the Varlville Mansion as its purchased housekeeper. While in New Orleans he discovered that Sancho Perez had, under another name, stabbed a man in that city; and it was a knowledge of this fact which enabled Theodora to terrify Perez, as we have related, by threatening to speak of that deed. The presence of the two Spanish officers, one with a green scarf, was premeditated, as both were secret agents of Count Romansoff.

The only great errors made by Theodora during all her flight were, first, inclosing the marked note No. 13,721 to Perez, and second, writing in her true hand "The Lord's Prayer." But in the latter case she did not intend that the paper should leave her sight.

After Madame Varlville had received Theodora as the negress Mercita, Romansoff went to San Domingo, and produced there the belief that he and his supposed niece had perished by the burning of his cottage; then went to England, obtained the daughter of Theodora, returned to Louisiana with the child, and placed her with an English family at Natchez, under the pretence that she was his grandchild, named Angelique—the name assumed by Theodora while she was in San Domingo.

It was in Natchez that Adrian Dudley became acquainted with Angelique, and fell in love with her. Angelique knew nothing of her imperial lineage, and returned the devoted love of Adrian. This was not unknown to Romansoff, who, as the hermit of the hut in the swamp, often had communication secretly with the disguised Theodora. But the latter was willing that Adrian Dudley should become the husband of her daughter, for she knew the noble character of the young man, and that no happier fortune could be Angelique's than to be the beloved wife of the brave, honorable and noble-hearted grandson of Madame Varlville.

But in 1795, or about a year before the illness of Madame Varlville, Count Romansoff set forth to find Basil Volskoff, Theodora's husband, as he had discovered cause to believe that the General was living, and among the Circassians. He found him, just prior to the capture and confession of Alexis Makoff; and together they returned to America, by way of Havana. There they heard that the Empress Catherine II. was dead—a report not true, as that tyrant did not die until six months later, November 9th, 1796. There they were accosted as strangers to be plucked by Gomaza the pawnbroker, who offered to sell them the note No. 13,721. This led to a confession by Gomaza of all he knew of the note, how he had obtained it, how Perez and two great Russians had recently gone to New Orleans to find "Isadora Raymundo," and how he had heard all were lost at sea.

Count Romansoff and the General instantly surmised the truth, that Apraxin and his thin-faced brother Count Ivanfosk, were again in search of the fugitive princess; and as soon as possible they set sail for New Orleans, arrived there at night, hurried from their vessel and reached the front door of the Varlville Mansion at the same moment with Monsieur Ralte. As their minds were set at ease by being told that the disguised princess was in the house, their fears that her enemies had not been lost at sea were put to flight.

It was discovered afterward that the Empress Catherine had elevated Count Apraxin to the rank of prince, at the time she was assured by him that Theodora had perished in San Domingo; but that when, nearly twelve years later, she learned that Count Romansoff had been seen recently in Havana, she had commanded Prince Apraxin never to return to St. Petersburg again, under penalty of exile to Siberia for life—and the same penalty for Count Ivanfosk—unless he brought with him indubitable proofs of the death of the princess and her child, and also of the death of Count Romansoff.

Therefore the inexorable pursuit begun again by Apraxin and his brother.

And now we must explain the sudden appearance of the rescued Theodora, and relate what had happened at the hut in the swamp, after the last quoted conversation of Perez and old Juan Olio.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE LAST OF THE VOODOO CHEST.

Before Prince Apraxin and Count Ivanfosk—as we must now designate the Adraste Scipian and Ivan of our story—called for the repast which they had commanded Perez and Juan to prepare, Theodora regained her senses.

But before she regained them the Prince had freed his face from its dye and its false beard and false nasal carbuncles, his head from the Voodoo wig, and attired himself in the costume of an English trader of that day.

It was then plain that he had the same thin and vulture-like visage as his wicked brother, the Count.

Theodora recognized her enemies at a glance, as her consciousness came back to her.

"Oh, God! I am indeed lost!" she groaned, and sinking back upon the bed.

The sun had not gone down, and there was yet light enough to reveal to her the exultant features of her foes.

"At last, Princess—at last you are in my power, and to be mine," said Apraxin.

"God pardon me and thee, Michael Apraxin! Thou wert Adraste Scipian?"

"Yes."

"Here to murder me, as you tried to do years ago!"

"Yes—after a time."

"Nay, as it is only my death that your cruel mistress the Empress desires, give me some of your poisons, or a blow from your dagger, that my life may end now, Apraxin!"

"No. You must speak first of your child."

"Ha! of my child! No. I will not. She at least shall escape your hate."

"Her child is a daughter, Ivan," said Apraxin to his brother.

"She has sunk into a swoon again, Prince," replied the Count, pointing to the unhappy lady.

"True. I will force this potion upon her. When she recovers again she will be on the vessel, and strong enough to bear all that I have in store for her," said Apraxin, who then forced the again insensible lady to swallow a few drops of some liquid which he poured into her mouth.

"Diablos! I cannot bear this much longer. A million maledictions on these two Russian devils!" thought Perez, who was looking on. "Will they never call for the ragout?"

But soon after the two Russians did call for food.

"Come," said Apraxin, "we must eat, for I am hungry. After that we will place the woman on the litter we have made and begin our journey through the swamp, so as to arrive at where the vessel is before daylight."

"I find the litter heavy and awkward," said the Count. "As she is unconscious, you and I can carry her by turns on your mule."

"True. We will do that. Come, Juan—serve us our meal here before the hut. You have prepared the savory ragout we like so much?"

"Been ready long time, Massa—don't know what to call de Senor now," replied Juan.

"Call me Mr. Elton; and this gentleman, Mr. Dalton."

"Yeth, sah," replied old Juan; who, had he been white, would at that instant have been pale as death itself.

He had just seen Perez empty the entire contents of the vial into the pot of ragout, and then pour the savory and steaming mess into a large dish.

"All ready, gentlemen," said Perez, as he placed the repast upon a rude table before the hut.

The two hungry Russians ate voraciously, for their long fasting had given them a famous appetite. In a few moments they both began to laugh loudly.

"Diablos! It is doing its work," thought Perez.

"What make dem laugh like two fools?" thought old Juan.

Then the Russians sprang up and begun to dance wildly, shouting and laughing like lunatics.

"Joseph! Perez!" exclaimed Apraxin, after a time, and laughing hoarsely. "Give me your hand for a reel."

"Bravo!" shouted Perez. "For a dance of death. Here is my hand, my noble prince. The convict dances hand in hand with his highness."

"You are a traitor!" cried Apraxin, suddenly stabbing the convict in the side. "You have poisoned us with the Voodoo poison!"

"Diablos! I am badly hurt!" roared Perez, breaking away from Apraxin, ere the latter could stab him again.

"The convict wins the game!" shrieked Apraxin, throwing up his hands, and falling flat upon his face.

"Curse thee, Spanish dog!" cried Ivan, as he fell under a furious blow from the iron fist of Perez.

"A million maledictions on you two!" exclaimed the triumphant convict, as he drove his knife to the hilt into the breast of Ivan. "And upon you, your Highness!"

But Perez fell before he could reach the prostrate Apraxin.

"I am badly hurt, Juan. Take my knife and make sure of your Don Sebastian."

"He done dead, Cappen," replied Juan.

"Make sure of him! Knife him! Caramba! I am bleeding to death!"

"He done dead, Cappen," replied the trembling Juan.

"Then come to me, and stop this flow of blood, or Sancho Perez will be as dead as he in an hour."

"Sartainly, Cappen. Do all I kin to save you, sah."

"So. That is well, Juan. A foul stab, but I will live yet. When the lady recovers her senses, go with her wherever she may wish, Juan. Tell her how Sancho Perez loved her and saved her. That he hated 'Isadora Raymundo,' but adored his Angelique!"

And then the wounded convict told much to Juan which Juan was to tell the lady, in case Perez died, and where to find papers which would force Gomaza to give up the million of reals that belonged to Sancho Perez. And thus two hours passed, and then Theodora, less affected by the last drug she had swallowed than Apraxin had designed, rushed from the hut, still half unconscious of what she was doing.

But old Juan seized her ere she could bound away into the swamp, not knowing whither at the moment, and told her she was safe.

She gazed around, and soon learned from the wounded convict the fate of Apraxin and Ivan, and of the plot by which they had deceived Madame Varlville.

"Go with the lady, Juan. I will live if some surgeon of the city can reach me before another sun sets," said Perez. "But if you find me dead when you return, Juan, don't bury me in that chest—"

"Dat ches', Massa Cappen, bound to be de coffin ob de man, woman or chile dat first unlocked he arter de deff ob de great Syphaxo."

"It was I, Juan. I was the first. But I shall not die yet. I have had as bad a stab as this more than once. Only a muscle is cut somewhere, and I cannot stand up."

"He shall have aid," said Theodora. "Since these two are dead, I will not fear to tell Madame Varlville who I am. But I am quite weak, old man, and I fear I may not alone make my way through the swamp."

"Juan goes wid de handsome lady. Dis ole colored hidalgo swored an oaf to sarbe de young white woman dat sabed him life in Havana. We send you white doctor, Cappen. I takes de Voodoo cane wid me."

"Adieu, my Angelique!" groaned Perez, as they departed into the black darkness of the swamp. "But I shall live to be blessed with her thanks, if I have surgical aid before to-morrow night. I know where I am hurt."

Half an hour after, with the fire of where they had cooked lighting the space before the hut, Perez saw Apraxin raise himself upon his elbow and glare at him.

"Diablos! not dead! I must try to reach him," cried Perez, who then began to crawl toward the poisoned Prince; striking his knife into the earth, and slowly drawing himself up to it.

Apraxin, though sensible of all, could not move an inch to evade this slow but sure approach.

"I come!" said the desperate convict. "I come by inches, 'Isadora Raymundo!' In half an hour I will reach you! Then I will avenge surely the wrongs of my Angelique, and of Sancho Perez! I will stab you three times, as I stabbed that coward Leon de Vargas!"

"Mercy, Sancho Perez!" gasped the poisoned Prince.

"I remember Angelique, and I remember the mines of Almeida, Prince!"

"Halt, Sancho Perez!" cried a hoarse and ferocious voice, from the darkness of the swamp.

"Ha! Who speaks?" demanded Perez, alarmed.

"Pedro Vargas!" was the reply, and the next instant saw that vengeful mulatto at the side of Perez.

"I am Pedro Vargas. I have been lurking near this hut from the day you killed the son of my white brother. Leon de Vargas was my nephew," said the mulatto. "I am here to avenge him, and myself, Sancho Perez. The father of Leon de Vargas was my half-brother. He gave me my freedom. You kidnapped me and sold me into slavery. I am here to avenge myself and Leon de Vargas. Carajo! I am Pedro Vargas!"

"Who is that behind you, man?"

"Where?"

"In the shade there behind you, mulatto!"

"No one. I am here alone, Sancho Perez."

"Liar! There's some one behind you! Stand aside! Ha! it is the spectre of Angelos Rio!" shrieked Perez, and his yell of dismay filled the swamp like the screech of a wounded cougar.

"I am losing time," said Pedro Vargas, grasping Perez, receiving one stab in his breast, and then wrenching away the knife of the wounded convict.

"Millions of maledictions on you, Pedro Vargas! What are you doing?"

"I am dragging you into the hut, Sancho Perez."

"For what?"

"To put you into the Voodoo chest!"

"Diablos! Alive!"

"Alive! I will lock you up in it, and then fire the hut. Such shall be the vengeance of Pedro Vargas!"

"Hold! I am not alone in this chest," cried Perez, as Pedro Vargas was about to shut down the lid upon him. "Malediction! the spectre of Angelos Rio is here under me!—of all whom I have slain: of the Portuguese captain! of the two taskmasters of the mines! of the innkeeper who had my belt! of—"

"Bah!" said Pedro Vargas, and he shut the Voodoo chest and locked it.

He was wounded mortally, but he had strength left to fire the hut in twenty places.

Then he sank down near the helpless Apraxin, and died, gazing at the blazing hut, and hearing, as if sweet music, the last shrieks of Sancho Perez.

The poisoned prince heard and saw all.

Prince Apraxin did not die until the noon of the next day. He was able to speak much before he died, and he died in the presence of Gen. Varlville and Count Romansoff.

Juan conducted Theodora as they fled through the swamp, as we have stated, and they went straight to the bedroom of Madame Varlville. There Theodora heard and recognized the voice of Count Romansoff, as he conversed with Madame Varlville in the White Room.

We have related how she rushed into the embrace of her husband.

When aid arrived in the swamp for Perez at sunrise of the next day, only the embers of the destroyed hut remained. Of the chest, only ashes. Of Perez, only a calcined skeleton.

The strange prophecy of the Afric Voodoo king was thus fulfilled.

Of the fate of Gomaza, we will state that after being forced by Count Romansoff to deliver up the reals of the dead convict, he hanged himself in his shop, fearing that the authorities of Portugal were about to seize him.

One year passed, and Adrian Dudley was wedded to his beautiful Angelique, the daughter of Theodora.

Though the tyrant Empress of Russia died in 1796, Gen. Varlville and his now happy wife never returned to Russia.

In 1800, Spain gave up Louisiana to France. In 1803, France sold Louisiana to the United States; and the Varlvilles chose to be citizens of the Great Republic rather than push the claims of Theodora for the crown of Russia.

Madame Varlville lived to see the children of Adrian and Angelique—her great-grandchildren—well grown.

When informed of the fate of Leon de Vargas, and well assured that his guilt was a safe secret in the bosoms of her own family, she said, in her stately way:

"It is well. The honor of the Varlville name has been preserved."

The family still live in New Orleans, but not under the above name.

In 1826, at the supposed age of one hundred years, died Juan Olio.

His last years were years of ease and full content in the Varlville Mansion.

His last words were:

"Put in de coffin wid dis ole colored hidalgo de Voodoo cane ob de great Syphaxo. No one arter Juan Olio mus' tote dat cane."

The Voodoo Cane was buried with him.

THE END.

[In our next number, we shall commence the publication of a new sea story by our popular contributor, SYLVANUS COBB, JR. It is entitled—

KATE ARLINGTON;

OR,

THE BUCCANEER'S BRIDAL.

A STORY OF SHIP AND SHORE.

It is full of interest from the opening of the first chapter to the close of the last.—ED. LEDGER.]

DECIDED BY FATE.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

"If you will take it, Leah; will you?"

Archer Sherman laid an exquisite little fan in Leah Aylmer's hand—a fair, round hand it was, with taper, pink-nailed fingers, that just matched with the girl's other graces: a Juno-like figure, daintily pure complexion, jetty, lustrous eyes, and brightest of gold hair.

Just now Archer Sherman thought what a charming girl she was—her cheeks all aflush, her eyes all alight with the pleasure his gift had afforded. She was standing just within the large bay-window, whose profusion of rustic baskets, vases and stands that were covered with green twining vines, made a charming background to the picture; for a picture it was—that fair girl in her white trained dress, with the delicate pink Roman sash knotted half-way down the skirt; the narrow pink Roman scarf under the lace sailor collar; the Etruscan gold and pink coral earrings, brooch and bracelets; the elegant watch chain of alternate circlets of pink coral and gold; and the rare flossy hair, arranged in a most becoming profusion of light crêpe puffs and curls, and among the golden hairs a narrow fillet of pink velvet.

"If I will take this darling little fan! O, Archer, indeed I will, and thank you very much. Will you fasten it on my watch chain, please?"

So Archer Sherman, the grave-faced, proud-hearted man, who never had before succumbed to woman's charms—this man whom all the maidens had striven in vain to win—lifted his gift to Leah Aylmer with fingers that trembled with the love of his heart.

And yet, with a strange diffidence, he had never dared tell her how he worshipped her—he who could eloquently address a crowded audience of the first in the land—he whose pen had often caused dire consternation among the enemies of a good cause. This proud, brave, dauntless man was a very coward when he would fain pour out his soul at the feet of this girl of eighteen. And Leah? Oh, she blushed and smiled and shivered a little while he attached the trinket to her chain, and wondered, with a sly glance at his magnificent head and clear cut features, if he *could* be won by her or any other woman. For she loved him better than she knew herself. Archer Sherman was her oracle, by which every thought and act of her life was regulated; and after her own sweet, womanly caprices to attract this lover had enslaved him completely, she never knew of her victory, and sometimes—this is a secret—cried heart-brokenly over it. Even now, when everything was so propitious, when it seemed as though Cupid himself had arranged the time, place and *personæ*, Archer Sherman did not open his arms and take her to his heart, and call her darling; and it would have been so easy, too.

Had he but known how she loved him; had he but known what a dismal future awaited them both for his cowardice; but he didn't.

It was the same house, the very same room; and in the bay-window pendant baskets, covered with trailing, star-flowered vines, and oaken vases wherein grew choice plants, lent to the apartment an appearance strangely familiar, yet strangely unlike.

In the days past, there had been an air of indescribable elegance and refinement in the Aylmer mansion; now, when it had passed into the hands of Mrs. Albert Pennoyer, it was characterized by the same high-colored splendor that that lady rejoiced in personally. She was a tall, graceful woman, with a clear, dark complexion—dark almost to brownness, yet superbly clear and warm-hued. She had the blackest of black eyes, shaded by heavy, fringing lashes, and overarched by thick brows, whose elegant contour was one of the lady's especial vanities. She had raven black hair, that she arranged according to the prevailing mode, and that always was becoming, whether rolled high *en Pompadour*, or arranged in low, flossy ringlets over her forehead. She had scarlet lips, the upper arched like Cupid's bow, and a clear, carnation tinge on her cheeks. A stylish, handsome widow, now just thirty, who had married Albert Pennoyer for his money, and who now, mourning dispensed with, was on a second look-out.

Just now Archer Sherman was all the rage, consequently Mrs. Pennoyer's especial delight. He was the rage for two reasons: one, he was considered invulnerable, almost unapproachable; the other, he had just returned from a seven-years' business connection in China, and was decidedly "new," even to "old" friends.

And among Archer Sherman's old friends was Mrs. Albert Pennoyer. Kate Willis she had been in the auld lang syne.

On this sunny January afternoon, then, Mrs. Pennoyer was elegantly dressed, and waiting for a promised call from Mr. Sherman; but of course Leah Aylmer, as the maid showed her into Mrs. Pennoyer's boudoir, did not know that. She was as beautiful at twenty-five as she had been at seventeen. She was maturer, and perhaps a trifle paler than then; but still, considering all the trouble that had been piled on her young shoulders, she had preserved wonderfully.

Now, very plainly attired in a black alpaca street suit, and her vail over her face, Leah came into Mrs. Pennoyer's presence.

"Oh, it's you, Miss Aylmer! I was expecting some one else. Will you sit down?"

She spoke so distantly, so evidently against her will, that Leah blushed painfully.

"Thank you. I will detain you only a moment. Perhaps you will look over these"—she uncovered a small casket—"and select for your own use from them. Necessity compels me to sell my jewels, Kate—Mrs. Pennoyer."

Mrs. Pennoyer reached out a dainty brown hand for the jewel casket.

"Oh, yes," patronizingly; "you used to wear such splendid ornaments when we were in the same set—three or four years ago, isn't it?—the time, you remember, when everybody thought you were engaged to Mr. Sherman."

A sudden, swift pallor swept over Leah's face. She made no reply, but Mrs. Pennoyer saw the white fingers tremble as they raised a pearl ring from its violet velvet rest.

"That shot told," thought she, and then began tumbling over the shining treasures.

"You've a number of rings, I see. Here is an amethyst set too, but I don't become amethysts, or pearls either. I adore turquoise, only it would not go with my Indian skin—pink only does that. Oh! oh! isn't that watch chain and charm exquisite? O, Miss Aylmer, I'll have that pink coral and gold chain for my neck, and that exquisite little fan for a medallion."

But Leah's deft fingers had closed over the tiny little fan.

"That, alone of them all, is not for sale," she said huskily. "You may have the chain."

Mrs. Pennoyer's black eyes flashed.

"Not for sale! Oh, to be sure; I understand now. Let me see. Mr. Sherman gave you that?"

Her voice was full of malicious triumph as she sent the arrow to Leah's heart; and yet, as she deliberately laid the snare for Leah's feet, she wondered how any man could pass by such a woman and not love her.

"It does not matter who was the donor, Mrs. Pennoyer. Do you wish any of these?"

She spoke as a duchess might speak who was conferring a favor; and then Mrs. Pennoyer, pretending to be absorbed in the jewels, went on murmuringly:

"I do wonder which Archer would like me in best? These emeralds are too dark; true, *aqua marine* will go splendidly with my black lace dress; and I'll wear them when he comes again. So—"

Leah's lip quivered under her crêpe vail. It was so hard for her that Archer Sherman had jilted her, and would marry Kate Pennoyer while she remained so true. Had he been returned long? She was too proud to ask.

"I will not detain you longer, Mrs. Pennoyer. If you decide to purchase, you can send your maid. I wish you good-afternoon."

Poor, proud Leah! Hers was a bitter task, and the tears fell thick and fast under her shrouding vail, as she hurried home.

Archer Sherman was a good deal older looking, but a great deal handsomer than when he went away; and Mrs. Pennoyer, as she looked earnestly at him, thought what a wonder it was that he had reached such mature age untouched by woman's charms.

But she intended to teach him a different lesson; she decided to marry him herself. And so, her little brown fingers gracefully lacing and interlacing as she talked, she vailed her bright eyes, and allowed such sweet, snaring glances to meet his now and then.

"I haven't seen our mutual friend, Miss Aylmer, since my return," he had said carelessly; and then the black eyes opened widely in surprise.

"Miss Aylmer! Leah, you mean? Dear little thing! Just before she left New York she gave me *such* a beautiful keepsake."

She arose and swept her blue silk train across the carpet, and took something from a little glass box.

"Did you ever see anything so perfectly lovely?"

Under her full drooping lids she was watching him, and she saw him start as if a serpent had touched him, when she laid in his hand Leah Aylmer's little fan, the one he had given her years agone.

"She gave you this? May I ask when?"

There was a slight huskiness in his voice, but she would not notice it.

"Let me think; it must be a year or more ago, just as she went away."

"And you haven't seen her or heard of her since?"

There was such eagerness in his rapid questions.

"Not once; but how I would love to see her again!"

There was not a tremor in her voice, but there was a glad triumph in her tones as she went on:

"Leah was *so* beautiful, I always thought; didn't you? And when she insisted on my accepting this little pink and gold toy, I told her it—"

A low rap on the door interrupted Mrs. Pennoyer, and then Leah Aylmer entered unannounced.

"If you please, Mrs. Pennoyer, I accidentally left—"

Then she saw Archer Sherman, who sprang to her side.

A painful blush spread over her face, then she paled; then, somehow or other—how she hated herself—the tears overflowed her sweet eyes.

"Leah! Leah! how *could* you give it to her? Oh, I was so sure of you!"

She raised her face proudly.

"What do you mean?"

He turned toward the chair where Mrs. Pennoyer had been sitting, but she had gone—why, she knew best.

And then came explanations and mutual expressions of love; and when Leah went out from her old-time home, leaning on Archer Sherman's arm, and the dainty little fan close clasped in her fingers, he whispered, as they crossed the threshold:

"My darling, when we are married we will buy your old home back again; shall we? for in it has been decided by fate the most momentous event of our lives."

A DEMONSTRATION.

BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

"Pshaw! Nonsense! The thing is ridiculous upon the very face of it!" declared Professor Boardman, with indignant emphasis.

"But," ventured Sam. Jenkins, a bright-eyed, bold youth, from Davenport, "the Professor of Anatomy and Physiology does not agree with you. He thinks there is not only reason, but facts susceptible of demonstration, in the proposition."

"Let the Professor of Anatomy and Physiology attend to his own department of science," retorted Boardman, warmly. "The thing, I tell you, is preposterous. Of course we all know that the mental powers exert a strong influence over the material organism; but when you tell me that the body of a healthy man may be so far operated upon by a mere whim of the mind—"

"Not a whim," interrupted Jenkins; "but a settled conviction."

"A conviction arising from what?" demanded the Professor.

"No matter, so long as it is a conviction."

"But it does matter," pursued Boardman. "If the conviction have no basis in fact, then the man cannot feel it; and if he thinks he feels it, then he shows himself weak and foolish, and not a healthy subject. The philosophy you would advocate is the philosophy of the ghost-seers and charlatans of all ages. I tell you, the story is a sheer fabrication."

Boardman was our Professor of Chemistry and Experimental Philosophy. He was a man of fifty, or more; well read in natural science; a deep student; very set in his opinions; and apt to be severe under controversy. Like all men who are proud and sensitive in maintaining cherished ideas, he would admit no argument which threatened to upset him.

The occasion of the present discussion was a story which had appeared in one of our magazines. It was the story of a strong man who had been made sick, and carried to his grave, by a mere mental hallucination. The mental impression, derived from circumstances entirely external, had found the man in perfect health and vigor of both mind and body, and had, in a short time, carried him off. The truth of the story had been vouched for by good authority, and our Professor of Anatomy and Physiology had signified his belief. But Boardman would not believe such stuff.

"Why," said he, crushing the offending magazine in his hand, "the strong, healthy man is either master of himself, or else there can be no such thing as human accountability. If he is master of himself, then a simple bugbear cannot conquer him. This story cannot be true. If the man was prostrated as is here stated—and this I do not deny—he must have been a diseased, and not a healthy, man."

"You mean to say, then," queried Jenkins, "that a man's material substance cannot be successfully attacked through a mental impression."

"Not through an impression of a healthy mind. A mind diseased, as from cerebral disturbance, may gradually wear upon the body. In fact, the whole organism is really involved in the difficulty."

And there, as the Professor was becoming irate, we suffered the matter to drop. There were six of us in the class that day, and we talked the matter over after we had left the recitation-room.

"Boys," said Sam. Jenkins, "if you'll join me, we'll give Prof. Boardman a physical and patent demonstration. Will you try it?"

We jumped at the opportunity, and straightway put our heads together to lay the plan.

"I know the game," said Sam. "It was played once at Yale, and I think we can play it here; only, mind you—it won't do for us students to be the only actors. The Professor might smell a mice. We must secure the help of outsiders."

And our very first application for assistance was to Professor Gardner, of the Anatomical and Physiological department. We told him what Boardman had said, and he was ready enough to give the opinionated man a pill. In fact, he was anxious. Boardman had practically slurred him before the class, and he desired to wipe the slur out in the most emphatic manner possible; so he not only joined us in our plan, but he lent us the assistance of his name in our influence upon others; and without that influence we should have entirely failed in enlisting old Pompey, the black janitor; and I doubt if we should have been able to gain the coöperation of two staid old farmers of the neighborhood, had not Gardner assured them that the thing was for a fair and honest purpose.

It was the habit of Professor Boardman, on pleasant mornings, to take a walk out into the country. He was rigid in his obedience to the laws of health as he understood them, and he believed that he owed his present robust and vigorous mental and physical condition in a great measure to these morning walks.

It was about a week subsequent to our discussion with the Professor that we were prepared for our demonstration. One bright, balmy, June morning, while the sun was just peeping up over the forest-crowned crest of old Mooselair, and the drooping dew-drops hung heavily upon the regal foliage, Prof. Boardman stepped forth into the college yard, and inflated his broad bosom with the fragrant breath of the matin hour. He had emerged upon the gravelled walk of the green, planting his hickory staff with sturdy strokes as he walked, when he met Phillip Carney, of our class. Phil. was a quiet, modest fellow, and a close student.

"Good-morning, Mr. Carney."

"Ah,—Good-morning, Professor.—A lovely morning."

"It is, indeed."

"You are not feeling well, sir?"

"How?"

"I say,—you are not feeling well this morning?"

"Why—bless your soul! What put that into your head? I never felt better in my life."

"Excuse me, sir. We were talking yesterday about the change in your looks.—It seemed as though it had come on suddenly. But I hope it may be nothing."

"Why—bless you!—Pshaw!" And the Professor shook himself to show how strong he was.

Phil. smiled affectionately, and said that only his great regard had made him anxious.

"You may be aware," he went on, "that I am just plunging into the pathology of the heart; and I find that hard study, and protracted mental labor of all kinds, have been prime promoters of morbid diseases of that organ. And then, again, you are at just about the age, and your immense volume of blood—"

The Professor stopped the student's tilt by a vehement punch of his cane into the hard gravel.

"Silence! You are demented! Go your way, sir, and pray that you may be as free from disease as I am."

"Pardon me, sir," returned Phil. meekly. "May your walk in the morning air restore your color."

The Professor stalked away proudly erect, and at the gate he met old Pompey, the janitor.

"Mornin', Mas'r Boardman."

"Good-morning, Pompey."

"You's lookin' pale dis mornin', sar."

"Eh?"

"Hope you isn't sick, sar."

"Why, you black rascal, what do you mean?"

"Lor' a' marcy! Mas'r, you musn't feel hurt. I didn't mean nof'n; only I t'ot I'd nebber seed ye look so pale an' ghostly. And yer eyes,—what makes 'em look so queer?"

"How queer?"

"So kind ob dead like, an' sunk in, like as if dey was goin' out."

"The difficulty is in your own eyes. You've been drinking, you rascal!"

"Sure's you're born, Mas'r—"

"There!—That's enough. Go about your business."

And the Professor strode on. But his step was not so buoyant as before. He was thinking, and naturally enough, under the circumstances, his thoughts reverted to disease of the heart. Within the year last past at least ten of the old alumni of his own alma-mater had died of heart disease, and some of them had died very suddenly. And, naturally enough, also, his thoughts took up and considered the various causes of the trouble as he understood them.

And thus he walked on beyond the town, and by and by he was hailed by the cheery voice of Farmer Belknap, who was leaning over his gate.

"Ah—good-morning to ye, 'Squire."

"Good-morning, Mr. Belknap."

"An't ye a little risky, 'Squire, venturing out into the damp morning air?"

"Venturing! *Me?* What do you mean?"

"Why, you don't mean to tell me that you are well, do ye?"

"And why not?"

"Why not? Goodness mercy! Why, you're as pale as a ghost!"

"Pshaw! You are looking at me through your tobacco smoke. I never was better!"

And the Professor moved on; but his step was slower still, and he began to feel an uncomfortable sensation in the region of the heart. By and by he approached the dwelling of Farmer Farrar, and as he saw the old husbandman standing at his door, he determined this time to make the attack, and he did it quite bravely:

"Good-morning, Neighbor Farrar! Beautiful morning!"

The farmer's only reply was a look of well-feigned amazement.

"How now? What are you looking at?"

The good man's face brightened, and then elongated.

"Bless me!" he uttered. "Is it you, Professor? I sartinly didn't know ye."

"Didn't know me?"

"No. How you've changed! What is it? An't ye well?"

"Well?"

"Ye look like a corpse. Hadn't ye better come in, and let my women folks fix ye up something warm?"

The Professor got away as soon as possible, and turned his steps homeward. His heart was growing weak and faint, and he felt a chilling, deathly sensation in every part. He thought over anew the most remarkable cases of heart complaint with which he was acquainted, and he now began to wonder if he would have strength to reach home—a pretty sure indication that his strength was failing. As he reëntered the town he was gazed at, ever and anon, with wondering looks. Three separate times friends who met him started as if horror-stricken; and near to the college gate he was met by Sam. Jenkins.

Now Sam. Jenkins had come out to lie in wait for the Professor, and had prepared himself to assume his *rôle;* but when he saw the man's face, so pale and wan and pained; and when he marked the staggering, uncertain step, he was truly startled, and his look of concern was instinctive and natural.

"For heaven's sake, Professor, what is the matter?"

"Jenkins,—is it you?—Help me! I am very weak!"

And Jenkins gave the poor man his arm, and literally bore him to the vestibule; and on the way, in husky, broken sentences, Boardman told how he had been suffering. In the hall, where a number of the students were assembled, the Professor sat down. He could not go any further until he had taken breath.

"My dear Boardman," said Prof. Gardner, who had come in, "you must allow me to prescribe for you."

"My heart, Gardner!"

"Your heart is all right. This is only a freak of fancy."

Boardman was upon the point of indignant reproof; but Gardner stopped him.

"It is as I say, Professor Boardman; and if you must blame anybody, let your blame rest upon me, for I have upheld the boys in their experiment."

"*Experiment?*"

"Aye. You left the college this morning a perfectly well man; and you can now feel, of your own experience, how quickly and surely a strong man may be brought low through mere mental hallucination. It has been a put-up job, from beginning to end."

There is no need of detailing the variety of emotions which our Professor of Chemistry and Experimental Philosophy exhibited on that occasion. Suffice it to say, that within a couple of days he had entirely recovered from the physical effects of the shock of our demonstration, and that we never again heard him decry against the philosophy of the story before mentioned.

MY BOY 'S COMING HOME.

BY LOUISE S. UPHAM.

"Good-morning, dear neighbor; I've reached here at last,
But quite out of breath, I've been walking so fast.
Which one of your children is sick? Now, pray tell.
I've been up half the night, for my babe is not well,
And long before sunrise I saw the smoke rise
From your chimney; and I said, 'If my eyes
Don't deceive me, there is trouble to-day,
In the home of our neighbor, good old Mother Gray.'

"But dimpled and smiling, and flush as a girl
Who is waiting her sweetheart, her brain all awhirl
With the tide of pure love, you are looking to-day
As if frosts of November had melted away,
And back in youth's spring, you were culling the flowers
Of Hope and Content, for the bright, sunny hours!
Are you drinking Life's wine from a chalice of gold,
Or does some greater joy all your being enfold?"

"It is joy, neighbor, joy! Why, where have you been,
That you've not heard the news? I'm so glad you've dropped in!
My cup with life's blessings is filled to the brim,
For—would you believe it?—we've had news from *him*—
From Jamie, our eldest, who ran off to sea
A wee bit of a lad. Let me think—it will be
Twenty-one years next April since he went away;
And Jamie, *our Jamie*, will come home to-day!

"My life has been happy—my life has been blest;
Three dear baby girls I have clasped to my breast
Since he left us; yet none but a mother can tell
How my heart ached and yearned for my lost boy. Ah, well,
The sighs and the tears and the prayers that I gave,
Perhaps all were destined my darling to save,
To shield and to keep him from evil to come,
For *to-day*, to his mother, my boy's coming home!"

THE RIVAL SISTERS.

By ELIZA A. DUPUY,

AUTHOR OF THE "EVIL GENIUS," THE "WHITE TERROR," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XLV.

DR. PRESLEY OUTWITS MACON.

On a dark and dreary evening our travellers reached the great metropolis. Macon had allowed his friends to suppose that he intended making only a brief visit to New York, for the purpose of finding suitable accommodations for Mrs. Blake and her afflicted daughter till they could set out for Europe. It was his purpose to write back, stating that such inducements had been offered him to accompany them, that he had concluded to do so, and resign his medical practice to young Simcox. The sale of his few effects and those of Mrs. Blake could be made at the same time, and the money forwarded to them before they left.

Hans Muller had very reluctantly consented to part from his wife, but the vehement desire she expressed to see the old country finally prevailed, and she went away rejoicing in the thought that she was really the only one concerned who was mistress of the situation.

The dumb girl had no friends who were sufficiently interested in her to care whither she went, and she clung to Estelle quite as fondly as the unfortunate girl did to her; so she accepted Mrs. Blake's offer to retain her in her service, believing that she also was to be taken to Europe.

At the depot Macon found the friend to whom he had written—a dull, heavy looking young man, who was evidently a person of small perceptive powers and sluggish mind. Mr. Hinton rarely looked beneath the surface; he accepted appearances as facts, and did not trouble himself to make inconvenient inquiries about the affairs of his friends.

When they met they shook hands, and Hinton said:

"I am glad to see you, Ju. I am quite ready for you. I've had the house cleaned, and fires made, and I've engaged a carriage to take you to it at once, as you said you did not wish to go to a hotel."

"Thank you, Reuben. I knew that I could depend on you. Mrs. Blake's daughter is not in a condition to be seen by strangers, and the mother is sensitive about her. You understand?" and he touched his brow significantly.

Mr. Hinton looked compassionate.

"Wrong in the upper story, eh? That's bad; but where she is going there will be nobody to mind anything she may do. I'll speak to the driver, and tell him to draw up to this place while you bring out your friends. I will drive you in my cab and lead the way, for the hackman would never find the place."

This conversation had taken place on the platform, and Macon returned to the train to inform Mrs. Blake that a carriage was waiting to take them to their destination.

Estelle passively permitted herself to be led out, and placed in it. The others followed, and in a few moments they were whirling away through the lighted streets.

The life, bustle and movement seemed to excite the pale girl who had hitherto sat so quiet, and she began to laugh and make signs to Eunice, who sat in front of her in a state of bewildered astonishment at the sight of such a wilderness of houses.

But they rode on and on, gradually leaving the roar of the great city behind them, till they drew up in front of a large, gloomy looking house, with a light burning in one of the windows.

Trees grew up to the very walls, and rattled their leafless branches against the windows. At the sound of an arrival, a middle-aged woman came to the door, holding a lamp in her hand, and peered out inquisitively. Behind her was a lad of fourteen, with a shrewd face and unkempt hair; and Mrs. Muller, whose spirits had begun to flag when she found how far she had been taken from the city, hailed his appearance gladly, and thought it would be easy to make this boy the medium of communication between herself and her ally.

Hinton came up to the carriage door; Estelle gave her hand to him, and quietly descended. She had thrown back her vail, and for the first time he had a view of her lovely face.

"By Jove!" he muttered, "she's a regular stunner, she is, and it's a shame that such a girl should be *non compos*. But Ju. Macon will bring her out of that, and of course he means to marry her. I believe I'd like to cut him out though, if I thought I'd have half a chance."

Unconscious of his admiration, Estelle allowed him to lead her to the dilapidated portico in front of the building, closely followed by Mrs. Blake, with the two attendants laden with carpet bags in the rear. A baggage wagon with their trunks claimed the attention of Macon, and he stopped to settle with the drivers of the two vehicles, and see that all had been safely brought.

Hinton spoke to the woman at the door in a cheerful tone, asking her if she had been afraid to stay so late in the house with only a lad for her companion.

"Oh no, sir," she replied, "I'm used to being by myself, and I wouldn't have minded if Jake had gone off, as he threatened once. *I* an't feared o' nothing here, though people do say—"

"Never mind what they say, Mrs. Brown," interrupted Hinton rather hurriedly. "Show the ladies the way into the house, and try to make things pleasant for them. You have supper ready, I suppose."

"Oh! yes, sir; I took a deal of pains to have everything nice, and I've got ready a supper that's fit for Queen Vict'ry herself."

Finding the woman more disposed to talk than was agreeable, Hinton took the lamp from her hand, curtly saying:

"You can go and look after things in the kitchen, Mrs. Brown, and I will attend to everything else. This way if you please, Mrs. Blake."

He led the way across a wide carpetless hall, with no furniture except a hat stand made of deers' antlers, on which Hinton threw his shawl as he passed toward a door standing half open. Within this a bright anthracite fire burned in a large grate, which gave the gloomy room a more cheerful look than it could otherwise have worn.

Everything passed off quietly for the night. In the morning Mrs. Brown took Mrs. Muller into the well-stocked store-room before she went away, and showed her where the various articles were to be found.

Soon after breakfast was over, Estelle, attended by Eunice, went out to explore the tangled pathways around the house, and Macon, after a long interview with Mrs. Blake, drove into the city to make his arrangements for an immediate departure for Louisiana.

He was not quite satisfied with the desolate old place Hinton had beguiled him into taking, but he did not know how to exchange it for anything better, especially as it would be necessary to hold Miss Landry under strict surveillance till Hester was safe under his own protection. Yet it would hardly be safe to leave four unprotected women in a solitary country house within a few miles of a great city. Hinton would scarcely be willing to spend his nights there, for he had shown himself nervously anxious to get away from it on the previous evening; so the only alternative was to seek his assistance in procuring a reliable man to go thither every night, and remain as a sort of guard till morning.

But Hinton was not to be found in New York. A brief note addressed to Macon was left on his table, in which he stated that he had been summoned to the sick-bed of his mother, and would leave by the first train for the little New England village in which she lived. Macon was annoyed, but he must stay a day longer in New York, and in that time he could find some one who could be trusted to remain on guard at the country house in his absence. He had few acquaintances in the city, and he had no wish to encounter any of them; yet he was compelled to call on one to prove his identity, when he went to the bank in which Mrs. Blake's money was deposited to make arrangements for its transfer to foreign securities. She had given him a power of attorney to act for her, and the business was soon satisfactorily accomplished.

Macon then went to a hotel, dined there at a table with a gray-haired old gentleman, with a long venerable looking beard, who wore a pair of green goggles, and peered through them as if he was extremely near-sighted. He spoke very seldom, and Macon scarcely noticed him, so deeply was he wrapped up in his own thoughts.

A waiter brought a note to the gray-haired man, which he quickly snatched at, and sharply asked:

"Where did you get this? Who brought it here?"

"It came through the penny post, sir. The clerk said you were inquiring if a note had been left for you, and he sent me with it."

"It's all right," said a gruff voice, and Dr. Presley, for he it was, arose, and turning his back on Macon, read the few words Mrs. Muller had found means to send through Mrs. Brown's son to the penny post.

Mrs. Muller had written:

"We are in a lonesome country house, a good ways from town, but that's all the better for our plans. M. says he must go to-morrow, and I told him I would be afeard to stay out here with no man on the place. Don't you think you could get him to hire *you*, if you'd fix yourself up a bit? He said he'd dine at your hotel; so if this gets to you in time, you might do something. If it don't, I'll write again to-morrow. G. M."

Presley tore the paper into small bits, and went into the office, whither he knew Macon would soon come to settle his bill. He sat down, and furtively watched for his appearance from behind a newspaper he drew from his pocket.

In a few moments Macon came in, and after paying for his dinner, he said to the clerk:

"Could you find a respectable man for me who, for a consideration, would go to a country house every evening, for a few weeks, and occupy a comfortable apartment there, for the purpose of keeping guard over a widow lady and her daughter, who, with two women servants, make up the household?"

"I do not know of any one I could recommend for such a service," said the clerk blandly, and then turned away.

Macon walked out, and Presley followed him to the pavement. He had walked but a few steps toward the cab which awaited him under the charge of a small boy, when a card was thrust in his hand, on which was written the name of the Reverend John Stillwell, and a husky voice said:

"I overheard what you said to the clerk, sir. I am far from home, and nearly out of money. I am a man of peace, but I could guard your friends as well as any other, and if you would accept me, it would be a great kindness to me. I have business in this city that must not be neglected, and my money, as I told you, is almost exhausted. I think it must be Providence that threw you in my way."

Macon turned and surveyed the venerable face; it inspired him with confidence, but he coldly said:

"You are quite a stranger to me, sir, and you must be aware that I could not place such a trust as I spoke of in the hands of one unknown to me. Can you give me references as to your reliability? If so, I shall be glad to assist you, and serve myself at the same time."

"Certainly, sir. That is a precaution you are bound to take. I refer you to Dr. Wakefield, and the Reverend Mr. Binks of Brooklyn. They are both personal friends of mine, and they will gladly aid me in any way."

"I know nothing of the last-named gentleman, but I am well acquainted with Dr. Wakefield by reputation. If you bring me a written testimonial of character from him in the morning, I shall be glad to engage you in the service of the lady I mentioned."

"Where shall I find you, sir? Will you be at this hotel to-morrow?"

"I think not; I am anxious to set out on a long journey, and the sooner I can be off the better I shall be pleased. I shall leave on the afternoon train for the South, and our business must be settled before I go. A friend of mine has rooms on Broadway, and you can meet me there at ten in the morning, bringing your credentials with you. Here is the address."

And he thrust Hinton's card into the hand of the other, and sprang into the waiting cabriolet. With a nod, he drove away, and Presley walked briskly back to the hotel, claimed his carpet bag, and after locking himself in his room, effaced the name from it. He then employed himself in writing the certificate of character that was needed, though he took care to disguise his hand, that Macon might not recognize it. He then retired to bed, quite satisfied with the progress he had made toward getting the control of Estelle Landry's fate, and slept soundly.

At ten he was at the appointed place, and a few moments later he was joined by Macon. After glancing over the few lines Presley presented to him, he said:

"I am very glad I met you, Mr. Stillwell, for you have extricated me from an embarrassing position. This is quite satisfactory. I am satisfied that you will take the best care of those ladies, Mr. Stillwell. I have the use of my friend's cab, and I will transfer it to you till Hinton returns. I brought a boy in with me, who is loitering in the street. He will show you the way, and it will be best, perhaps, for you to go out at once, and inform Mrs. Muller of the arrangement I have made with you. She is the housekeeper and general manager."

"Very well, sir. Set your mind at rest concerning your fair friends, for I pledge you my word to look closely after them. If you will point out the boy and the cab, I will set out for the place immediately, as I wish to return before three, to fill an engagement I have made."

Walking like one in a dream, Macon preceded Presley to the street, and beckoning to Jake Brown, who was holding the bridle of the fast trotter Hinton prized more highly than any of his possessions, he ordered the lad to bring him up, and briefly said to the boy:

"Show this gentleman the way to the place you came from, and be sure to take the best care of the horse while I am away. Mr. Stillwell is to use him every day, but you are to be responsible for him."

"Ef he's brung back reg'lar, I'll rub him down an' give him his feed. I can't be 'sponsible for nothin' more'n that," said Jake, with a doubtful glance at the gray-haired, venerable looking person near him.

"That is all I require of you," was the curt reply. "Take Mr. Stillwell to the place, and obey his orders about the horse and cab."

He nodded to Presley, turned suddenly away, and walked rapidly down the street.

CHAPTER XLVI.

ESTELLE RESTORED TO CONSCIOUSNESS—DELIRIUM.

Presley could have laughed aloud and snapped his fingers in his glee at the ease with which his enemy had been deceived, but he felt the necessity of maintaining his clerical gravity before the shrewd-looking lad who had taken his place on the seat beside him. At the first turning he left Broadway with its crowd of pedestrians and numerous vehicles, glad to avoid attracting observation to himself and his companion.

Jake gave him brief but clear directions as to the route they were to take.

The boy became silent after this, and when they drew up in front of the lonely house, Presley said:

"It is gloomy looking enough, and I do not wonder that women are afraid to be left in it with no protector."

He drove through the broken-down gate, and drew up in front of the dilapidated mansion, which towered grim and forbidding of aspect among the leafless trees.

Jake sprang down, and was about to strike a resounding peal on the old-fashioned knocker, when the door opened, and Mrs. Muller, looking much annoyed, appeared on the threshold. She sharply asked of the lad:

"What brought you back so soon, and who is that in the carriage? Dr. Macon need not think that I'll allow anybody he can pick up on the streets to come into this house under the pretence of taking care of it."

Presley descended from the cab with dignified precision, and ascending the steps, lifted his hat gravely, and said:

"Good-morning, Madam. I shall be glad of a few moments' conversation with you while this lad looks after the horse. He has been driven rather fast, I fear, and he's too nice a nag to be neglected. Go to the stable with him, boy, and I think I can convince the lady that there will be no danger in accepting me as a protector in the absence of Dr. Macon."

Jake sprang away to do his bidding, and Mrs. Muller ungraciously said:

"You can come in, sir, but I hardly think you'll insist on coming here at night when I tell you that I am expecting a friend of mine who will be here afore the day is out, and he'll be very glad to look arter this old den while we have to stay in it. Dr. Macon confessed that he didn't know nothing about you except what you told him yourself, and I'll fairly say that I don't want no strangers coming to meddle with the poor child that's been brought to this out o' the way place, because she an't in no state to be seen by strangers."

Mrs. Muller, while speaking thus, led the way to the apartment which had been occupied by Macon. She had not the slightest suspicion of the identity of the supposed stranger, and she had determined to rid herself of the intruder as quickly as possible. Now that Macon was gone, she intended to carry things with a high hand, and be dictated to by no one.

Presley followed her into the room, closed the door, and in his natural voice, said:

"My disguise must be perfect, when not only Macon, but you, Mrs. Muller, did not penetrate it. Confess that I am an ally after your own heart, for I have not let the grass grow under my feet since we parted, and I have managed so cleverly that I am here as the accredited guardian of that unfortunate girl whose cure I am so anxious to undertake."

Mrs. Muller uttered a suppressed exclamation, and she stared at the well got up figure with an expression of incredulous amazement. She presently said:

"It's your voice, Dr. Presley, and of course it's you, but I'd never have thought it. Your own mother wouldn't have known you, I'm sure. You must have followed us up very close, and have kept your eye on Macon all the time."

"I took the next train after you left for New York, and I was in the city but a few hours later than you. I waited to hear from you, and I got your note while sitting at the same table with Macon. I managed him cleverly, I think, and I am here to aid in the good work we have settled to accomplish. How did Miss Landry bear the journey, and in what condition is she now?"

"She's about as usual, and she hardly seems to notice the difference in things around her. I have told her that a great doctor is coming to see her, to try to bring back the mem'ry she has sense enough to know she has lost. If you could see her put her hand to her head the way she has of doing, you'd feel sorry for the poor thing. I an't a soft-hearted woman, but she's found the way to make me feel for her."

"I already feel the deepest compassion for her, and my interest in her is such that I will use every effort to restore her to memory, hope and fortune. I am not working for a reward, Mrs. Muller, though of course that will be welcome if it comes."

"Yes, I dare say, sir; but we'll work all the better if we can not only get ahead of them that's run over us, but get well paid for it too," said the matter of fact Mrs. Muller. "There is Miss Landry now, coming up the front steps with Eunice arter her. I'll go out and tell her that Macon has sent out a doctor to prescribe for her. What is your new name, sir? for you haven't told me yet."

"Stillwell—that is really my second name, though I have never used it before. Dismiss the girl, if you can, and let me see Miss Landry with no one present but yourself."

Mrs. Muller was absent about ten minutes, and Presley could hear her voice in the adjoining apartment, speaking earnestly and persuasively to her charge. At length the door of communication was unclosed, and the woman said:

"Please to walk in here, Doctor; Miss Landry is willing to receive you."

Presley went in, to find Estelle standing in front of a large chair from which she had just risen, and there was a look of wistful inquiry in her large soft eyes that went to his heart. She held out her hand, and said:

"I hope you can do something for me, Doctor. I am in a strange way, and try as I will I cannot make out what has happened to me. I seem to be living in another state of being, for everything about me is new, and—and not always pleasant. Mrs. Muller says you are very skillful. If you will only give me back the power to think, to recall the past, I shall be indebted to you more than money can ever repay."

"My dear young lady, as long as you can express yourself with such propriety, there cannot be much amiss with you. You have had a long illness I have been told, brought on by a severe concussion of the brain. I shall do my best for you, but you must permit me to examine your head carefully, and submit to such treatment as I may think necessary."

"You won't do anything to make my head hurt me more than it often does now?"

"No; on the contrary, if you will point out the exact spot where the pain lies, I think I can promise to relieve it."

She raised her hand and placed the tips of her fingers on the top of her head, and said:

"I feel as if a great blow had been given me there, and left something pressing on the brain. There is always a dull throbbing in that spot, and when I walk much, it gets worse. Dr. Macon couldn't help me, and I hardly think you can. I am afraid I shall never be able to remember again, and it is a pity, for there were others that had claims on me, that I ought to remember, and—*I can't*. Isn't it dreadful, Doctor?"

The soft tones of her voice sounded very pathetic to Presley, and his interest in her deepened with every artless word she uttered. His voice was husky with emotion as he replied:

"I am a more skillful surgeon than Macon, and I am almost certain that I can ascertain the cause of your suffering, and relieve it. Sit down, if you please, Miss Landry, and let me examine the spot you complain of as hurting you most. I will be very gentle, and you need fear nothing from me."

Estelle regarded him earnestly, and then with a sudden emotion of confidence she placed her hand in his, and said:

"I will trust myself to you, Doctor, for you look good and kind. I am sure you will do all that is possible to restore my memory. At moments I have glimpses of the past, but they fade away as quickly as they come. Some great horror seems to darken over them, and blot out everything save a sense of its own overwhelming anguish. Oh, sir! what is it—what is it that has brought me to this frightful condition?"

She shivered, and became so pallid that Presley feared she was about to faint. She only muttered:

"Let me alone, please. I am tired. I have been walking all the morning, and I want rest."

Dr. Presley nodded to Mrs. Muller, and returned to the next room, followed closely by her. She anxiously inquired:

"What is your opinion, Doctor? Will she come round again, and not be too long a doing of it either?"

"If I had my instruments with me, I could remedy the accident in five minutes, and very soon afterward the scenes that she now gropes dimly after would rise before her clearly enough—too clearly not to endanger a being so sensitively organized as our patient is. When she learns her father's death, and begins to understand the fraud of which she has been made the victim, I shall tremble for the consequences."

"Ah, well, Doctor, that has to be risked, you know; and if you get her that far along, we'll hardly let her die between us. I'm a first-rate nurse, and there's too much for me depending on her life, to let her slip through my fingers. I guess *she*'ll be good for the money Macon thinks to swindle me out of."

"Macon is an ignoramus, as I have always asserted. He can cure fevers, and deal with ordinary ailments, but he is unequal to the management of a complicated case. I am at a loss to know what to do with Mrs. Blake when we go away from the place. We cannot take her along, and it would be barbarous to leave her here with no attendant but the dumb girl."

"Eunice must go with Miss Landry," said the woman quickly. "She is very fond of her, and something might happen to her sure enough, if the girl was sent off. I've thought about Mrs. Blake, and the best way to dispose of her will be to put her in an asylum for weak-minded people."

"Really, ma'am, I am afraid that will be going too far. Mrs. Blake might bring an action for damages against us if we represent her as crazy, when she is not so."

"She wouldn't dare to do such a thing. Besides, she *has* used such excessive quantities of opium in one shape or another since her daughter went away, that she's hardly 'sponsible for what she does. Between that and the other stuff I mean to give her, she'll be too stupid to make any fuss about what's done with her."

"By the way, let me see that preparation, if you please."

Mrs. Muller took a vial from her pocket, filled with a nearly colorless liquid, and after tasting it, Presley poured the whole on the fire, and decisively said:

"If the woman will tamper with opium herself, let her do it to any extent she chooses, but I'll not have her drugged with any such dangerous stuff as that. You may place morphine in her reach, and those addicted to its use are apt to become fit subjects for the lunatic asylum."

Presley returned to New York, and spent the remainder of the day in making inquiries as to where he could secure a quiet cottage a few miles from the city, to which he wished to remove an invalid who was under his charge. Fearing the return of Hinton, and his interference with his plans, Presley had determined to take the management of the whole affair into his own hands, and he had little fear of opposition from Mrs. Muller, who was the only one he intended to consult.

On referring to the columns of a newspaper, he found advertised the very thing he wanted: a cottage dwelling, handsomely furnished, in the suburbs of Brooklyn. The owner was going to Cuba to spend the winter, and wished a tenant to take care of the place, at a merely nominal rent.

Presley lost no time in calling on the agent. He paid the first quarter's rent in advance; referred to his friend Dr. Wakefield for his character, and found that the mere mention of a name so distinguished in the walks of medicine was considered a sufficient voucher for his own respectability.

Before he set out for the country, Presley's arrangements were all made for a flitting at an early hour on the following morning, for he was unwilling to risk the operation on Estelle Landry's head till she was in a more cheerful and comfortable home than the dreary old den to which she had been carried.

In three days after Macon set out on his southern journey, those he left behind him had been transferred from the house in which he left them, to a light, cheerful looking cottage, with a pointed roof, stained glass windows, and all the modern appliances of comfort.

Mrs. Blake had made a feeble protest against their change of residence before Macon's return, but she was in no condition to command obedience to her will. She only aroused from the stupor in which her senses were steeped, at uncertain intervals, and occupied her few lucid moments in complaints against Mrs. Muller and the strange doctor she had brought into the house.

What the housekeeper asserted was true. Mrs. Blake had for years cautiously used the fatal drug which so surely dominates those who tamper with it, and since Hester's departure she had surrendered herself hopelessly to its influence. With heavy eyelids and drooping lips, she moved through her room more like a somnambulist than a being capable of intelligent volition, and she gradually lost all care or thought for what was passing around her. She dreamed of but one thing, looked forward to but one hope, and that was her speedy reunion with her own child.

Dr. Presley brought Jake with him to the cottage, with a promise to keep him near himself if he proved capable and honest, and the boy was only too happy to accept employment from him.

Eunice Barker vaguely comprehended the explanation Mrs. Muller tried to make to her, and was quite contented when she found that their removal did not involve a separation from Miss Landry. She had formed a fanatical attachment for her, and when assured that it was for Estelle's sake that a more cheerful abode was found, Eunice was at once reconciled to the change.

When the time came for the operation on which so much depended, Eunice was dispatched to Brooklyn under Jake's care, to purchase a few articles for the store-room which had been forgotten; Mrs. Blake was locked in her own apartment, and there was no one to interfere with the two who had undertaken the responsibility of Estelle Landry's cure.

While she lay in a sweet sleep, chloroform was carefully administered to her, and in a few moments the slight operation required was performed, and the trifling wound dressed. She was kept under the influence of narcotics for several days, but it was evident, when she did arouse to consciousness, that the pressure on the brain was removed, and the expression of vague wonder and pain had left her face.

Dr. Presley would have had no fears for her now, but for the terrible revelation that awaited her as soon as he thought it safe to inform her of the fatal accident which had placed her in her present position.

He deferred it as long as possible; but one morning, when he entered Estelle's room, he found her sitting up quite dressed, and evidently determined on some course of action. She seemed very much excited, and when she turned toward him, her eyes were bright as stars.

"Doctor," she said, "Mrs. Muller refers me to you for an explanation of the singular position in which I find myself. Where is my father? and what has happened to me, that even the changes in the season were unmarked? The last scene I recall was in summer, and now there is snow upon the ground. Why am I here among strangers, and how do you come to have charge of me?"

As Estelle Landry was perfectly ignorant of the existence of such persons as Mrs. Blake and her daughter, Presley found his explanation even more difficult than he had expected it would be. But he gradually managed to unfold to the pale listener an outline of the facts, and to show her why she had been made the victim of the shameful plot suggested by Mrs. Blake.

Her brain was still too much affected to enable her to grasp all the details, but she clearly comprehended one thing, and that was, that a young girl claiming to be herself had gone to Louisiana to assume her place, to welcome back to his native land the lover she had clandestinely wedded—perhaps to become his bride.

Even the anguish of knowing herself an orphan paled before this; she forgot the pledge of secrecy she had herself exacted from Raymond De Lorme, and holding up the hand on which glittered her wedding ring, she excitedly exclaimed:

"When my husband comes back he will unravel all; however like we may be, Ray can never mistake another woman for me. No, no—that were impossible. Our souls are knit together, and I wear the ring without which, for generations, no son of his family has ever wedded. They would think it a sacrilege. See—here it is! The impostor left me that, because she was ignorant of the importance attached to it."

Presley gazed on the broad band of gold that encircled her slender finger, and asked, in an excited tone:

"Is it really true that you are married, Miss Landry? I begin to see now why Macon was so anxious to get to Louisiana before Hester could give her hand to his rival. Where is Mr. De Lorme? You spoke of his return."

"He was sent away to travel in Europe, because they said I was too young to be married. Ray was very miserable, and—and on the evening he left me, when we were out driving, I went with him to a magistrate, and there was a civil ceremony; but with us that was a mere form, for we are Catholics. I only consented to it as a legal form of betrothal, which would give my lover the assurance of my constancy. Do you think that girl would dare to come between him and myself?"

Presley privately thought that there was no knowing what such a being as Hester Blake would *not* dare, but he soothingly said:

"Have no fears on that score, my dear young lady. If Mr. De Lorme is so far away, you will have ample time to expose Miss Blake before he can cross the ocean—that is, if you will not excite yourself, and become so ill as to upset all our plans."

"I will try not to do that," she earnestly said. "I must be calm, that my poor bewildered brain may regain the power of clear thought. Oh, Doctor! I owe you a debt that I can never repay. Make me well again—take me to my home, and I will prove to you how grateful I can be."

"I will do all that is possible for you, and you have near you two devoted friends in Mrs. Muller and Eunice Barker."

"I believe that, and I will reward them when I get back the power to do so. Oh, Doctor, my heart feels as if it would break under this dreadful load. Give me something, quick—quick, for I feel as if I am dying."

As was her habit, Mrs. Muller had been listening at the door, and she now bustled in, lifted the half-fainting girl to the bed, and administered the composing draught Presley prepared.

For a few hours it seemed to produce the desired effect, but when Estelle awoke in the silence of the night, and recalled all she had heard that day, the wrung heart refused to be comforted. She tried to think and decide on the course she must pursue, till her brain gave way, and by morning she was raving in wild delirium.

When Presley was summoned to her bedside, he gazed mournfully upon her, and said:

"I feared this. I would have spared her if I could, but she would be told the fatal story. There is scarcely a chance for her now."

"I believe she'll die, sure enough," said Mrs. Muller disconsolately; "but if she does, Hester Blake 'll have to pay me roundly for letting her hold on to what doesn't belong to her."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

A WILLING LABORER.

Old Jobson was a kind-hearted, accommodating man, owning a large farm in Conway, N. H. One morning in autumn a wayfaring man, sadly soiled and worn, called at the farmer's door and asked for work. It so happened that Jobson was very anxious to have his potatoes dug, of which he had several hundred bushels in the ground, and it also happened that help was scarce; hence, though not fancying the apparent capacity of the applicant, he determined to set him at work. An ox-cart was set in the potato patch back of the barns, and having furnished his man with a basket and a hoe, Jobson directed him to commence operations.

But the wayfaring man was weak and worn. He said he had always been used to having a little spirit when at work, and particularly did he feel the need of the stimulant at the present time. Jobson's better judgment told him that the man would be better off without rum; but as the man declared that he could not work without it, and as Jobson was anxious that the tubers should be speedily unearthed, he procured and gave to the laborer half a pint of rum in a black bottle, and then left him to his work.

Toward noon Jobson went out into the field to see how the wayfaring man was getting on; and he found the wayfaring man lying under the shade of the stump fence. The black bottle was upon the ground, empty, and the wayfarer was drunk. Jobson kicked him into a sitting posture, and demanded to know why he was not at work. The wayfariny man tipped back his head, and apparentlg recognized his employer.

"Work?" said he thickly. "Wha'-a-wha' work ye want done?"

"Why, bless my soul! didn't I hire you to dig potatoes?"

"Wal," hiccoughed the wayfarer, with virtuous assurance, "'f'u hired me, (*hic*,) 'ere I be; an' 'f'u want (*hic*) your taters dug, *why'n* (*hic*) *thunder don't ye fetch 'em on?*"

The wayfaring man was not detained to fulfill the digging contract. Jobson lost half a pint of rum, but gained a glorious good story to tell to his friends. S. C., JR.

THE SWEET MAGICIAN.

BY CALEB DUNN.

An air of balm, a violet sky,
A presence as of some magician,
Who, though invisible, glides by
On some grand mission.

I feel the light touch of his hand,
I feel his breath of wondrous sweetness,
And know that he will deck the land
With June's completeness.

The cheery sunshine wreathes his head,
And from his lips the summer's story
Comes sweetly, like a love-vow said
In love's young glory.

The leafless trees at his command,
Uttered in language warm and tender,
Put on their May-time garb and stand
In their full splendor.

The robin sings, the ransomed rills
Yield to the tropical temptation,
And all the air sweet music fills
With inspiration.

I see the violet uprise
To greet with smiles the passing presence.
There 's new light in its dewy eyes—
Joy's sweetest essence.

The Arctic wind's deep baritone
No longer swells its notes sonorous,
But softly comes, from spice-groves blown,
The South wind's chorus.

There is a harp in every tree
Wherein the mystic presence lingers;
Its chords are swept most rapturously
By unseen fingers.

I hear the notes the harp-strings yield,
I listen, and my heart rejoices,
For earth seems loveliest when filled
With June's sweet voices.

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AN ITALIAN LEGEND.

BY MARY KYLE DALLAS.

This is the Cathedral of St. Jerome. There is no finer organ in the world than this before which you stand. There are the singers' seats. See! here on the floor, there on the broad steps, a stain. It is red—a dull, dark red. At a certain hour of a certain day in the year, they say it turns to scarlet.

This is not the day nor the hour for that scarlet change. At all events, it lies dull and dark on floor and stair; but the women who clean the church have never been able to scrub that spot out, in all these fifteen years.

It does not matter why. You may find some chemical reason for it, if you are one of those who do not like a little taste of superstition; but it is a fact that those planks and those steps have been stained with blood for fifteen years.

That length of time ago, some half an hour before the commencement of evening service, a lady began to ascend the stairs that led to the singers' seats in an Italian cathedral.

The picture of a saint, with meek blue eyes and floating pale-gold hair, and hands crossed upon a white-vailed bosom, hung upon the stair-way. Above, a black cross, gilt upon the edges by the setting sun, arose between the casement and the crimson sky; below, in the hushed church, long, solemn shadows lay. The sweet, suffering face looked down from the great crucifix; the Madonna smiled from her niche, holding the Babe in her arms; flowers and candles and shrines were all mellowed and mysteriously beautified by the fading light; and here and there knelt a peasant worshipper counting her little rosary of black beads, and a priest, with bowed head, passed away through a little portal sacred to priestly exits and entrances, as though he left no thought behind him in the outer world.

But this woman ascending the gallery steps was no saint, no nun—a creature full of life and love and passion. The blackest hair, that ever seemed to glitter into purple when the sun kissed it, was braided about her head; her eyes were black also. Her face was like some mellow-tinted marble, save for the scarlet lips. An Italian woman, with Italy's perfect features and statuesque form; young, but not in many senses as young as a woman of her years born in colder climes would have been; not one of those women who are undeveloped girls until they wither into middle age.

She leant against the balustrade, and looked down into the church. She waited for something. Although she was soprano of the choir, it was not for the service to commence, nor to see the priest with his bowed head re-enter, nor to watch other worshippers glide in to await the coming Mass.

Not a woman who had seen her but would have known that she waited for her lover. But no woman saw her. The painted eyes of the saint upon the stairs were the only eyes there save her own.

At last she saw him. A figure with a wondrous grace in all its movements doffed its hat at the open portal, advanced amidst the shadows of the columned aisles, and passed the kneeling worshippers.

Then it vanished, and she knew that the saint upon the stairs could have seen it ascending, had it had sight in its blue eyes. A step smote the silence, a shadow crossed the marble floor, and then her own passionate eyes met his.

She was a singer of the opera, who added to her gains by singing also in the church. He was a prince. It is not so great a thing to be a prince in Italy, where they are rather common; but he was also young and beautiful and wealthy, as all princes in Italy are not.

They had met in that very spot. As she sat dreaming away the hour before service, she had turned and found him at her side. Her voice had drawn him to the spot. Her face bade him return thither again, and still again. And as for Bianca, when she saw him she said to herself:

"This is why no man ever charmed me before. I waited for him."

That was six months ago. She used to ask herself whether she had really lived before she met him. It seemed now as though she had loved him all her life.

His wealth and his title had nothing to do with her love for him. Had he been a poor singer like herself, he would have been the same to her, and the difference between their position never occurred to her as a matter that had anything to do with his esteem for her.

Some day they would share a home together, and whatever that home might be, it must be heaven.

When they parted he had told her that today he should have something very particular to say to her, and through her heart crept little thrills of hope. He would speak again of the beautiful villa by the lake side, where they were some day to live together, perhaps. It could be only something that she should rejoice to hear, that his lips could have to tell her.

He sat down and took her hand. He looked in her face almost sadly.

"Bianca," he said, "you love me. Say it again: You love me; and nothing could change you—nothing."

"I can think of nothing while you loved me well," she said.

"I never loved woman before," he said. "I never shall love another: listen, I swear it; and yet I have something to tell you that might make you doubt it. Bianca, you know my position in life—you know my title. Did it ever occur to you that a prince might be a slave?"

She looked at him again, but said nothing.

"We do not choose our mates as peasants do," he said. "They are chosen for us. Bianca, long ago my father chose a bride for me. She is rich; she is young; she is as hideous as a monkey. We detest each other, and—and I am to marry her to-morrow, Bianca."

He had held her hand so far. Now she snatched it from him. Her face had grown as pale as death, but she uttered no word.

"Bianca, dearest, it can make no difference," he said. "There is still the villa by the lake, to which I shall carry you. It will not turn your heart from me, this that I have told you? Bianca, speak."

"It is growing late," she said. "The singers are coming; I see them below. You must go."

"But you love me still?"

"The heart cannot change in five minutes."

"And you will remember the villa by the lake, and the happy life we shall lead there? Bianca, speak. Do a few words matter? Does a name matter? Speak!"

"Not now," she said. "Adieu, they are here."

The singers were on the stairs. The church was filled with worshippers. The organ lifted its voice; the soprano took her place. Below the young Prince paused to bend his knee for a moment before the shrine of his patron saint, and was gone.

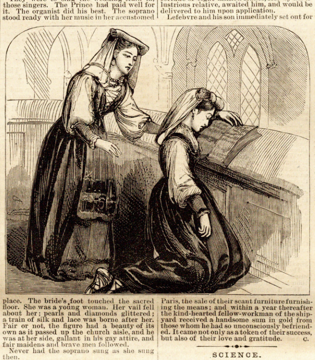
The Mass was said. The people departed. The church was closed.

And in course of time the night passed, the day dawned, and morning Mass was said.

Then came people to deck the church with flowers, and prepare for Prince Luigi's wedding.

In the singers' gallery Bianca stood again, pale as a woman of stone. The rest chatted of the coming ceremony, of the wealth of the bride, of the beauty of the bridegroom. Some declared the bride also lovely. They had seen her. Others said she was not beautiful at all. Bianca joined in none of the talk. She looked down into the church, as she had looked the day before, but this time no woman would have said, "It is for her lover."

They were to sing the wedding train in, those singers. The Prince had paid well for it. The organist did his best. The soprano stood ready with her music in her accustomed place. The bride's foot touched the sacred floor. She was a young woman. Her vail fell about her; pearls and diamonds glittered; a train of silk and lace was borne after her. Fair or not, the figure had a beauty of its own as it passed up the church aisle, and he was at her side, gallant in his gay attire, and fair maidens and brave men followed.



Never had the soprano sung as she sung then.

"Is it an angel, or only a woman?" asked the bride, in a whisper.

"It is an angel," said the bridegroom, and he meant no jest.

The priest stood waiting. The music died away. The happy pair knelt at the altar's foot.

In the gallery the soprano knelt also. She covered her face. Up there the words of the service were not audible, but when the blessing was uttered and the newly married pair arose, the singers knew their part had come again.

Bianca still knelt. Some one touched her. She did not move.

"S-s-t, Bianca. Still at your prayers, Bianca?"

Still she did not stir, and the one who had touched her gave a cry, and pointed to the floor. Over it a little red stream made its way, and dripped down the steps, just where you see the stain to-day—a stream of blood from poor Bianca's heart.

Italian women generally carry a dagger about their persons. To-day, at least, Bianca had worn one, and it was plunged to the hilt in her breast.

Poor singer though she was, she scorned such love as she now knew Prince Luigi had offered her; but she had loved him well, and bereft of the sweet hope that she had cherished, life became worthless to her. And so there are dark stains on those steps, and St. Jerome's Cathedral has its legend.

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PIMPKIN VERSUS BODKIN.

Jeremiah Pimpkin was an honorable citizen and a householder, and among his class he was an oracle. He flattered himself on his shrewdness. He often declared that he should have been a lawyer. He fancied that Solon Bodkin, Esquire, would have fared but slimly against him in forensic contest. Pimpkin raised turkeys, and upon a certain occasion it happened that a prowling dog made a raid upon his flock and killed four fine gobblers that were being fatted for the Thanksgiving market. Pimpkin made due inquiry and investigation, and satisfied himself beyond a peradventure that the marauding canine was the property of Lawyer Bodkin. Here was an opportunity he had long coveted. He waited upon the lawyer in his office, and was warmly welcomed, and invited to a seat.

"Squire," said Pimpkin, "s'pose a neighbor's dog should kill a lot of my turkeys, could I recover damages by law?"

"Certainly," replied Bodkin, "you can recover,—that is, if you can prove the fact."

"O, I can prove it. I've got the evidence all right and tight. And so you think there can be no doubt?"

"Not in the least. And now, what are the circumstances?"

"Well, Squire, last night *your* dog killed four of *my* best turkeys. What d'ye think about it now?"

"Why, my dear sir, I think you can recover. That is the law. What is the amount of damage?"

"Them turkeys was worth a dollar apiece, Squire. Four dollars will settle."

"All right," said Bodkin. "I wish to deal legally. Here is the sum."

And the lawyer handed over the four dollars, which Pimpkin took with a chuckle, and then departed.

Jeremiah Pimpkin had reached his home, having related his sharp practice with the lawyer to all his friends whom he had met on the way, and had just told the story to his wife, when Deputy Sheriff Reacher unceremoniously entered his domicile.

"A small bill, Mr. Pimpkin, which Squire Bodkin says I will collect or he will sue it to-day."

"A bill!—Squire Bodkin!" echoed Pimpkin, aghast.

"Yes," smiled the Sheriff,—"a bill for professional services in the case of 'Pimpkin *versus* Bodkin.' He says you sought advice upon legal points bearing on the case. The bill is five dollars, sir,—expense of officer, one dollar,—total, six dollars."

Pimpkin scratched his head vigorously, but he could scratch no path out from the trouble. He paid the bill, and from that time he was never heard to speak boastingly of his legal acumen. C.

GOOD FORTUNE.

My great-uncle, Nathan Boutelle, was for many years postmaster at Brunswick, and among the stories of his experience in the office was the following:

In May, of 1828, a package, charged with heavy postage, came by mail from ship, by way of New York, addressed to Perriot Lefebvre. This Lefebvre was an elderly man, and so poor that he could not pay the postage. He examined the superscription of the packet, but could recognize no friendly hand. The postmark was "*Paris.*" He shook his head—"It cannot concern me,"—and went away. Later the package was offered to Perriot's son, who worked in a ship-yard; but the son was as poor as was the father, and he would have refused it, had not a fellow-workman offered to advance the sum necessary to pay the postage.

"It is from your native country," said the companion; "and who knows what good fortune it may contain."

Young Lefebvre accepted the offer of his friend, and bore the package home to his father. The poor man broke the seal. Within was the transcript of a decree of a French court, together with a note from a lawer, informing him that he was the sole heir of Marshal Lefebvre, Duke of Danzic, and that a fortune of eight million francs, left by his illustrious relative, awaited him, and would be delivered to him upon application.

Lefebvre and his son immediately set out for Paris, the sale of their scant furniture furnishing the means; and within a year thereafter the kind-hearted fellow-workman of the shipyard received a handsome sum in gold from those whom he had so unconsciously befriended. It came not only as a token of their success, but also of their love and gratitude. C.

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SCIENCE.

Whether the rattlesnake's rattle is contrived solely for the benefit of other animals, to whom its warning notes foretell the approach of the deadly reptile, has long been a question with naturalists. Mr. Alfred W. Bennett, in a recent notice of Darwin's works, calls attention to the observations of Prof. Shaler of this country in reference to this subject. He has become convinced that the rattle imitates the sounds of certain insects, and thus lures the birds who prey upon them to a point within striking distance of the snake. It is true, as Mr. Bennett says, that this suffices to explain the apparent fascination which rattlesnakes are said to exert over their prey; but does it account for the like influence attributed to other serpents which have no rattles?

The *Times of India* mentions a remarkable phenomenon which was witnessed on a plain near Mandidroog, on the night of the 15th of June last. This extensive tract, though uninhabited, was observed to be covered with many thousands of lights, like a large city brilliantly illuminated. The scene, viewed through a glass by an observer ten miles distant from the plain, is described as resembling a part of the starry heavens. The cause of this singular appearance is as yet unexplained. Many of those who saw the lights believe that they were produced by the burning of inflammable gases exhaled from the ground.

An experiment has been made at Geneva by M. Alphonse de Candolle, for the purpose of ascertaining the extent to which the habits of plants are affected by the locality in which they are grown. He procured seeds of the same species from Russia, Scotland, Sicily, and France, and sowed them at the same time and under similar conditions. It was observed that the seeds from Northern regions were the first to germinate, and that the plants which they produced attained maturity somewhat earlier than those grown from seeds that came from warmer coutries.

Comparatively little is yet known of the effects produced upon health by changes in the weather; but in an address recently delivered in London by Mr. John Tripe, President of the Meteorological Society, he called attention to the few leading facts which may be regarded as established. Of these the more important are, first, that very hot weather or very cold weather is invariably accompanied by an increase in disease and the death rate; and secondly, that a cold, wet summer is more favorable to health than a hot, dry summer.

The French Academy of Sciences has just held an election to choose a foreign correspondent. This position is highly esteemed among scientific men, and the secret discussion over the merits of the respective candidates occupied three long sessions of the distinguished body. The final vote stood fifteen for Mr. Darwin, the English naturalist, against thirty-four for Mr. Loewen of Stockholm. The defeat of Mr. Darwin is attributed not to any error of his doctrines, but to the alleged fallacy of deducing them from such facts as he does.

The discovery of rich deposits of tin in Australia bids fair to prove of great commercial importance. The Government Geologist of Southern Queensland thinks the richness of the ore quite unparalleled in any other country, and the Professor of Mining at Melbourne pronounces its abundance marvellous. It seems that Australia, as well as North America, possesses a district known as New England, in which the richest of the newly discovered tin-bearing alluvials are found.

Mr. Daniel Draper, the Director of the Meteorological Observatory at Central Park, believes that the clearing of land does not diminish the volume of rainfall, and further, that the climate of the Atlantic States has not changed within a century. These conclusions are derived from his own investigations. Both of them are contrary to the popular views; the first conspicuously so.

The alterations of weight undergone by the human body in baths, formed the subject of an investigation recently made by two members of the Paris Academy, who came to the conclusion that the weight of the body is maintained or increased by absorption so long as the temperature is low or moderate, but diminished by immersion in warm water.

The crew and passengers of the last steamer which has arrived in Scotland from Iceland report the appearance of a new geyser, or boiling spring, in the latter country; but Captain Richard F. Burton, the distinguished African explorer, who is now travelling there, does not mention it in his letters home.

We learn from the recent message of the Mayor of this city that the rarest specimen in the large collection of birds belonging to the Museum of Natural History, in the Central Park, is one of the Great Auk, now extinct, which has been presented during the last year by Robert L. Stuart, Esq.

M. Le Verrier, the eminent French astronomer, urges upon physicists the importance of a new direct measurement of the velocity of light.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mabel says: "It seems that your store of wisdom is inexhaustible; therefore I come to you, hoping to be benefited by your wise and good advice. Please do not cast my letter aside, but answer in Notices to Correspondents, in next issue of the *Ledger*. I have been married nearly two years. My husband is good and true, and we love each other devotedly. The only trouble I have is with my husband's mother, who lives with us. She has treated me with marked unkindness since the first day I came to my husband's home, although I have tried hard to win her esteem and affection. She is in complete control of my husband's house, and has everything her own way, just as if her son had no wife. I have to submit to her ways on all occasions, although I am over twenty-five years old, and, I think, capable of managing my own affairs. Unless I do manage my husband's household, I can never fully prove to him my capacity for managing with economy and neatness. My husband desires that I shall be more pleasantly situated, but he is confident that his mother will never change in her manner toward me, so long as we live together, and he is not able to provide separate homes for us. What shall we do in order to have a pleasant home—most to be desired of all things on earth? Do not say, do your duty to each other, for I have tried to do my duty toward my mother-in-law, but she has manifested no appreciation of my efforts to please her. It seems that she is determined to do everything in her power to make me uncomfortable. Advice from you in regard to this unpleasant state of affairs will be most gratefully received." What can be said but that which you will not hear, "do your duty?" You must live in one home and your mother-in-law is unchangeable. Then "what cannot be cured must be endured." But we must say a word for mothers-in-law. When a lady has managed a house for half a lifetime, and sometimes under difficulties, it is pretty hard to abdicate all at once, because her boy falls in love with a pretty face and such other attractions as, no doubt, you heard of. Now, if the owners of the pretty faces would only "wisely consider" this feature of female nature, and put themselves in the mothers' places, many little collisions would be avoided. As a general thing we stand up for the mothers-in-law. They are very bad, indeed, if they will not prove true mothers when their sons bring them true daughters.

H. M. T. says: "I am a young man just arrived at the age of twenty-one years; am about five feet and five inches in height, and weigh about one hundred and twenty-five pounds. Now the trouble is here: I am not nearly so strong as young men of my age generally are; I am very temperate, using neither tobacco nor strong drink; have always been used to hard work, and being no longer needed at home, am working by the month at twenty dollars a month for seven months; I do a man's work, but I am so light that it hurts my health very much, especially toward the latter part of the season. I am getting very stoop-shouldered and hollow-chested, but my lungs are sound as yet. Still, some of my older friends tell me I must stop working so hard, or I will be an old man at thirty. Now, I have always had a great desire to go on the water, but have never been able to leave home until now. I think I am quick and apt enough to learn; but my main object is to gain health and strength. I must do something, you know, and I have not education enough for any business but hard labor. Now, would you advise me to go, and if so, which do you think would be best, on the lakes or on the salt water? And would there be a chance for enlisting in the navy at New York, and for what length of time? I am not afraid of the work, as working hours on the farm extend from about four o'clock in the morning until eight or nine in the evening." For purposes of gaining health and strength, the sea would probably be preferable to the lake. There is always opportunity for able-bodied men to enlist in the United States navy, but a man in the condition in which you describe yourself to be would probably be rejected. You might get a berth on a merchant ship, but you would find the work as hard as that on the farm.

Mayflower says: "Here is my case: I am eighteen years old. When I was but a child, my father promised to one of his dearest friends that I should become the wife of that friend's son. That son is now twenty-two years old, and he loves me dearly—so he says. He is almost crazy about me, they say; but I do not believe it. He says he will die with sorrow if I do not marry him. Now I do not want to marry him, because we are both too young to get married, and because I do not love him, although he loves me. He asked me why I did not want to marry him, and I want you to tell me whether I must tell him that I do not love him, or let the matter go on until he sees for himself that I have no love whatever for him. He says I am engaged because my father said so; and I say that I am not, because my father did not know whether I would love him or not. Please tell us who is right, and who is wrong." If you do not love the young man, you should not marry him. As you state the case, there is no obligation on your part to do so, as such a promise as your father made in your infancy is not binding on *you*, now that you have grown to womanhood. The alleged promise made by your father was probably a conditional one, and included your own consent and the general fitness of things when you and the young man should arrive at marriageable age. No father in his senses would make an absolute and unconditional promise of such a kind.

Theresa.—The Seven Sleepers, according to a legend of early Christianity which was widely diffused and generally credited, were seven noble youths of Ephesus, in the time of the Decian persecution, in the third century, who, having fled to a certain cavern for refuge, and having been pursued, discovered, and walled in for a cruel death, were made to fall asleep and in that state were miraculously kept for nearly two centuries. This story of the Seven Sleepers is related in the Koran, which states that, out of respect for them, the sun altered his course twice a day, in order that he might shine into the cavern for their benefit. The real truth of the matter is, by the best authorities, said to be, that when the bodies of the martyrs were discovered in the cave, which discovery occurred in the year 479, they were exposed to the veneration of the faithful, and in speaking of their death it was said, in the usual form, that "they had fallen asleep in the Lord." The ignorant people of the time misconstrued this statement, and it soon came to be said, and was readily believed, that the martyrs had fallen asleep in the cavern, and slept there in safety till the days of persecution had passed, when they were awakened and came forth. This story was the more readily believed, because many persons claimed to have seen and talked with the Seven Sleepers themselves, and the legend finally became accepted throughout Christendom.

Charles Sanders (San Francisco, Cal.) says: "Having noticed your answers to correspondents for the last few years with interest, and gleaning many an item of useful knowledge therefrom, I have taken the liberty of asking you to settle a question which arose among a number of gentlemen and myself a few days ago. The question was: Can a diamond be crushed by striking it with a hammer? And what is meant when we say a diamond cannot be reduced by pressure, and how would this pressure be exerted? By supplying the answer you will satisfy not only the doubt of myself and friends, but also that of many other persons." A diamond can be crushed with a hammer, if the hammer be heavy enough, and the power that wields it be strong enough. Sometimes a diamond is shattered without much difficulty. A diamond cannot be reduced by pressure—that is, it cannot be squeezed into any smaller compass than it is originally. A piece of lead, for example, on being subjected to heavy pressure, will be compacted into a smaller mass; but not so a diamond, though it may be crushed.

Dora (Nashville) says: "I heard two persons conversing about rain. One of them said that rain was formed by evaporation alone, and that it was absurd to think that it came by water-spouts filling the clouds, and then descending. The other believed in evaporation and water-spouts both, and asked the first how it is that angle worms and lizzards appear in water that has just descended, if they were not drawn up by water-spouts. Please tell me which is right, and also what you think about it." There is a great deal to be said about such things—much more than we have space to say. The moisture from which rain clouds are formed usually comes from evaporation. Angle worms, lizzards, frogs, and other things which sometimes fall with rain, are carried into the air by violent winds, which blow the water from ponds and small lakes. Water-spouts only occur on the ocean, and lizzards, angle worms and frogs are not inhabitants of the salt seas. Besides, water-spouts are mediums for drawing water from heavy rain clouds, and not for pouring water into them.

L. E. C. (Tuscola, Ill.) writes: "I was born and raised in Ohio, and was married in 1862. My husband wanted to come West, but I would not consent to come until about two years ago. I was not very well satisfied the first year. People told me that if I would go back and see the hills, I would be contented to live on the prairie, so I went back, and stayed a few weeks, and I am more miserable than ever. My connections are all back there. I have not even an old acquaintance here—nothing but entire strangers. I have tried so hard to be contented, but cannot get reconciled. What I want to know is this: Shall I insist on my husband taking me back to Ohio to live; or shall I stay here, and do the best I can?" There is no objection to your trying to *persuade* your husband to take you back to Ohio. It is hardly likely that if you limit your efforts to persuasion, and, to use your own expression, do the best that you can, he will wish to remain permanently where his wife is unhappy.

M. writes: "My father and mother are own cousins, and mother's sister was own cousin to my father, and she married her cousin's son, and his mother was own cousin to father and mother, and his grandfather was an own uncle to my father and mother. Now what I want to know is, what kin mother's sister's children are to me. What do you think of my marrying one of her daughters? Would it be against the laws of God and man?" Without pausing to calculate too closely the precise degrees of affinity which your statement discloses, we venture the opinion that there are "double and twisted" corners enough in your family; and we advise you to refrain from marriug your cousin, under the circumstances. Marry somebody else, if any one else will have you, and if not, don't marry. We think that, were you and she to marry, you would both be *cozening* yourselves, and *cozening* each other.

A Louisiana Widow says: "I have a judgment in one of the courts against a man for money due me on notes. The man's property has a first mortgage on it. I am too poor to pay the mortgage and take the property myself, and the property will not sell at the present time, although it is of value. The answer I wish is this: I am very poor and shall have to break up my home and go out to some place to work for my children until this money is paid me, and I think that will not be for a very long time. Do you think, if I leave the State or the country for a year or two, the mortgage is safe until my return?" Your being out of the country or in it will have no effect on your security; but if you go away you had better employ some good lawyer in your neighborhood to look after your interests during your absence.

Unhappy Wife (Boston) says: "I have read your paper many years, and am now in great trouble and ask your advice. I have been married fifteen months. I married young, and soon after leaving school. I knew nothing of the world, and thought all men good and truthful. My husband has since our marriage used liquor all the time; in fact, so much that it has injured his brain. He has a large property, which he has converted into money payable to his order. Some men, knowing his weakness, get him under the influence of liquor, and he signs checks for large amounts, and forgets it as soon as he has done it. He has done this many times. I wish to save him, and also his property. His friends and my own advise me to leave him, but I am not willing. I love him, and as long as is possible I will remain with him. Is there any way to cure him? or is there any way to obtain control of his property, to save him from giving it away? My own life is a very unhappy one, as my husband has a violent temper, which is aggravated and increased by the use of liquor. I beg you will not throw this away as too lengthy for an answer. A few words of advice or encouragement would be so grateful to me, as I now feel as if there is no hope in the future. I shall look anxiously for an answer." This is a case in which only a minute knowledge of the circumstances enables one to give advice of any value. You should probably consult a reliable and judicious lawyer, if all persuasion and all the influence of friends have failed. When it can be clearly shown that a man's intellect is impaired, there are legal methods of guarding the property rights of his wife or children. You should not hastily desert your husband even for this wickedness.

Boston says: "I come to you for advice, like many others. I am seventeen years of age, have attended college for a year, and am now in the Sophomore class—stand high, especially in mathematics, drawing and natural science. Now it is my ambition to become a civil engineer, and I am sure I would succeed if I could get a start; but not having anybody who knows about it to advise me, I am at a loss to know how to proceed—whether I should continue at college, where military and civil engineering is taught for four months of the Senior year. If I continue at college, could I get a position as an assistant engineer? What salary would I get? Would I have to go to an engineering school, if there is any? Would I require money to start? But if I find I cannot get a position, had I better enter mercantile life now, or go through college? Could I get a better situation after graduating, than I could now? Please advise me what to do. If you will do so soon you will greatly oblige." You had better go through college, picking up as much of mathematics and kindred branches as you can, and taking the engineering. Your position will be improved by your having graduated, and you will then doubtless better see your way to the next step. We have corrected some of your spelling. *Verbum sap.*

G. W. H. says: "I am a reader of your most valuable paper, and would like to ask you a question. I am a young man, eighteen years of age, and have lately formed the acquaintance of a young lady whom I love sincerely, and she also thinks a great deal of me. She is but sixteen years old, and every time I want to see her I have to meet her every Wednesday evening on a certain street, and of course it makes it disagreeable for both of us. She thinks her father would not like anybody to come to the house to see her. Now what I want to ask you is, in what way could I arrange it so that I could call to see her at the house? I am a steady young man, and I am industrious. If you will give my question a little consideration, I will feel greatly obliged to you." The first thing for you to do is to stop your clandestine meetings in the street. They are utterly inexcusable. The next thing is for you to call in a frank and straightforward way at the house, and if the girl's parents object to your visits, then stop them. You and she are both young enough to obey your parents, and should wait till you at least come of age before attempting to set up for yourselves.

One in Distress (Charleston, S. C.) writes: "Being a constant reader of your valuable paper, I come to you for advice for the first time. I am the widow of a United States soldier of the Florida war. My husband, while living, was a pensioner. He died during the late civil strife. In 1866, I tried to recover the pension through a claim agent, it being proved that my husband remained loyal to the general government until his death. The papers have been in the hands of the agent since 1866, and I can get no satisfaction out of him whatever. My husband was from Massachusetts. Please answer as soon as possible, and tell me what steps to take, and oblige one in distress." Write to the Commissioner of Pensions, at Washington, D. C., stating your case briefly and clearly. Cut out this answer and inclose it in your letter, and state the name of the claim agent who has your papers. The Commissioner of Pensions will have your case investigated, and see that justice is done to you. Give your full name and address, and also your deceased husband's full name, and the name of the regiment he served in, if you know what it was.

A Reader (Buffalo) says: "A friend and myself, meeting a mutual friend, asked him to tea with us. At our boarding-place is a lady boarder who my friend had never been made acquainted with—a fact of which I was not aware before this contretemps occurred. Upon being seated at table, where we were a little late, my friend introduced our gentleman friend to all excepting this lady, with whom I had been made acquainted. I noticed his omission, but for fear of placing him in a ridiculous position, and seeming officious myself, did *not* commence where he left off, and perform the other introduction. I fear the lady was offended. Please tell me what I ought to have done under the circumstances, through the *Ledger*, and much oblige." No lady of good sense will be offended with an evident inadvertency. You might without impropriety have made the introduction, or gently and politely called your friend's attention to his accidental omission. We hope the matter will not set Lake Erie on fire.

Ina of Clay asks: "What would you think of a gentleman who is engaged, and who is a member of the Methodist church, who would go in another place and win the affections of another lady, tell her that he loves her passionately, but that he can never be more than a dear friend, because he is already engaged? His sense of honor will not allow him to break with lady No. 1, although he loves lady No. 2 dearer than life. Then, after telling No. 2 all this, asks her forgiveness, and to try and forget him. Do you think such a person is a gentleman? And what ought I to do, for I am lady No. 2? Ought he not to have thought of this before letting me know he cared for me? I shall be very grateful to you, if you will answer my question." "Gentleman" is a very general word. It is a "gentleman" that "fixes" the boots at a hotel, wipes the dishes, etc. We should say that this particular gentleman has not a nice sense of honor or propriety, and he should get a good talking to in class meeting. Forget him.

Bible Scholar (Talbot County, Md.) says: "Please give me your opinion of the following: In Bible-class, last Sunday, the question was asked, Who were the first martyrs for Christ's sake? I answered, that Stephen was the first martyr. The teacher said the answer was not correct, but that the children killed in order that the infant Jesus might be destroyed were the first martyrs. I could not agree with him that the children were martyrs. It is true that in one sense they died for Christ, but not for Christ's sake. While not willing to yield to the teacher's version of the matter, yet I will submit that I am wrong, if *you* say he is right." We are sorry to be obliged to disagree with one engaged in so laudable a work as your teacher; but it is only by using the word "martyr" in a non-natural sense that the children in question could have it applied to them. The root idea in martyrdom is bearing witness, and they bore no conscious testimony.

J. A. M. gives the following items regarding voting and voters in England, in reference to an inquiry: "Every man who pays poor's rate has a vote in England and Scotland, and every man who lives in a house valued at £4 5s. a year ($21) rental, in Ireland, has a vote. This is the qualification for voters, and you will see that practically it amounts to household suffrage. Besides this qualification, every young man living in lodgings and occupying, as a boarder or otherwise, rooms which, if unfurnished, would let for $1.25 a week, if he resides in the same rooms twelve months, has a vote. This is called the 'Lodger Franchise.'"

Subscriber (Evansville, Ind.) says: "Having for a number of years been pleased and instructed with your valuable answers to correspondents, I trust you will do a couple of your readers the favor to answer this query: namely, What is the first and best book for a man to read desirous of entering upon the law? There is so many opinions expressed by different lawyers, that I desire to hear from the *Ledger*. Please answer at your earliest convenience and oblige." After the books that are necessary to a good education, such as grammar, Blackstone, Story or Kent may be taken up.

Fred says: "Do you think a young couple just commencing married life could live on a salary of $600 a year, supposing them to be economical, and to have $500 laid by 'for a rainy day?'" We tremble as we write the answer, guessing how much may depend on it. There are many young couples living on $600, but if they aspire to the luxuries of life in a city, they will find it a hard struggle. In a country district it can be done well enough, and "a dinner of herbs where love is," is to be preferred to a solitary, or a showy "spread"—pardon the word—where it is not.

Science (Owingsville, Ky.) says: "Will you please answer through the columns of your paper the following question: Have they ever succeeded in getting to either Europe or America a genuine live African Gorilla?" Owners of exhibitions have often announced Gorillas. Whether they are genuine, or what the genuine Gorilla is, we can hardly count as absolutely settled. The monkey that has been made famous as a newly discovered animal, has been long known to science as the *Toglodytes Gorilla.*

A Regular Subscriber (Mobile) says: "Will you please, in your column of answers to correspondents, tell us where to find an authentic account of who, when and where were King Gambrinus and St. Elmo?" King Gambrinus is one of the many royal personages with whom we have no acquaintance whatever. St. Elmo may be seen as a fort at Naples, and it is also a name applied to the electric light which sometimes plays round a ship's mast in a storm.

F. C. A. (Providence) asks: "Will you please inform us, through the colums of your appreciated paper, the height of Trinity steeple, N. Y., and by so doing end a contreversy?" The spire of Trinity Church rises to the height of 264 feet. Its columns, like ours, are spelled with "n." There is no controversy about *that.*

Bell (Illinois) asks: "When anything is presented to a young lady—such as a gold watch, for instance—for being the handsomest lady, what reply should the lady make?" She should say to the donor, "Thank you for the watch," and to herself, "Thank my stars for my beauty."

F. C. (Sullivan Co.) asks: "What is the meaning of the phrase, flotsam and jetsam?" *Flotsam* is where goods are cast into the sea and there continue swimming on the surface of the waves; *jetsam* is where such goods there sink and remain under water.

*** Several letters stand over to be answered in our next.*